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OR,

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AT

THE SHAH BHAG,

OR

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BY

THOMAS HENRY OTTLEY, LIEUT. H. C. S.

"THE passions in the human mind are still the same;
Go! seek then where you will, you'll find but man.
In what do Afric's tawny sons, or Persia's slaves,
Or Asia's endless multitude of castes and men,
Differ from ourselves? But in the form of character,
Which reason, acted on by education, custom,
Climate and religion, bids anger, hate, revenge,
Aye, e'en the kinder feelings, when indulged, assume."
Translation of a paper found in a Mosque at Bejapoor.


IN THREE VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

AFTER a distribution of some hundreds of prospectuses, and several advertisements in the papers, doubtless “Rustum Khan,” cannot have failed to excite, in some measure, the curiosity and speculation of those, before whom it is now placed for perusal. Of its merits as a production of literature, it does not become the Author to say a single word, but in vindication of its faults he may ; for where is that tame individual who would not rise with energy in his own behalf. At all events, I am not one of the slumbering class, either supinely inert, or too retiring : for these are qualifications little according with the grasping nature of the times, and wholly unable to cope with the exigencies of

the moment. Before I enter into an elucidation of the nature and intention of the work, which, doubtless, my readers will thank me for having explained to them, I would give a brief history of what has induced the madness, which leads a subaltern, in "these piping times of peace," when scaling ladders are in stores, from want of other employment, to place his foot upon the nearest and most insignificant step of that very dangerous one, which leads you, at once, to the top of the wall of the critic's fortress. As far as the very summit, I know you are permitted to mount, as if imperceptibly, only to ensure you a severer fall, when, in placing your leg confidently over the breast work, a kind friend gives you a lift the wrong way: and thus far in the secret, I should not like to be taken by surprise, and would, in offering a thousand pages for public scrutiny, beg those who would exercise such authority, to consider what I say, and be just and generous. Few who exercise the pen can also wield the sword; and as I, who am more apt at

the latter than the former, would be happy to overlook their unguarded posture, if opposed to me, is it unfair to ask them to deal with me by my own measure?

Having been gazing (until the sounds of music became more familiar than pleasing to my ear) upon the small crowd around the regimental band, which was playing close to my bungalow, at a frontier station, were a paucity of European residents, rendered each and every one a person of some importance, or a matter of disgust to others, in proportion as his conduct in society was of a lively or repulsive character,—I threw myself back in my arm-chair, in my porch, and there enjoyed a cigar, whilst my eye scanned the hills in the distance, which were now, in September, clad with the brightest verdure, and most luxuriant foliage. The fort of Sattarah, up-reared itself before me; the main bastion, built out from the natural escarpment, which is the bulwark of this place of strength,—bade my thoughts revert to war,—

the tiled roof of what is now termed the palace, sheltered with lofty trees, but which was, formerly, the prison of the Rajah of this place, when the power of an usurper was universally acknowledged by all, but those whose forces could control it, convinced me, how uncertain our lot is in this world, as the former captive now reigns, having shaken off his fetters, whilst his oppressor, by the watchful scrutiny of a well-organized guard, is limited in his wanderings as much as in his freedom.

Lost in a train of thought, idle in my ideas, and courting the most luxurious posture of quiet, I was soon lost to all before me, and, doubtless, had my servants been near at hand, they might have heard those rude murmurs which accompany a sound repose, and are generally rewarded by the school-boy, whose slumbers are thus disturbed by a school-fellow, with the unceremonious intrusion of a candle into the mouth of the offender. My dreams I cannot recollect ; for before I had sufficient

time allowed me to condense the flighty phantoms and imaginary landscape into a picture, the sudden crack of a hunting-whip, accompanied with "Yoicks, yoicks," aroused me, at a moment's notice, to feel the smart which the lengthened thong of this formidable persuader had, in passing across my legs, left behind it. I seized one of the goblets of water which was cooling close by, enveloped with straw, and hurled it at the retreating offender; but like a rabbit in a wood, whose momentary spring across the pathway defies the activity or prowess of the sportsman, to give effect to his aim, whilst the intended prey is before him, he clapped spurs to his horse, cleared the roadway, plunged among the guava trees, which formed an avenue up to my house, was lost to my sight, and the inoffensive missile fell to the ground, and was broken in pieces.

The band having in the meantime been marched to the lines, the company had

dispersed, and were now again seen crossing the brigade parade ground, on their return, after an airing, as is the custom. The ladies in their monchiels, the dons in their vehicles, the subs on their horses, now leaping a ditch, now charging a friend, or now putting a host of female attendants, in charge of the rising generation, to flight, in their hurry after a Pariah dog, whose sagacity and speed defies even the prowess of my old friend W., whose well known accomplishments of making a lame horse go, and bringing a wild hog to bay, are the theme of admiration. And now starts Dick of Derby on his new purchase, whose trembling limbs, he being an invalided charger, can scarce, at the first onset, lengthen out a foot, against that raw-boned poney of the ensign's, celebrated for pulling up and fixing himself at a halt, whether the rider desires it or no. "Well done, Dick," for he decidedly had the best of it, was just bursting into utterance, when one of his Highness's elephants coming in sight, away

he started, and left me to conjecture when and how he would return. “ Luckily you pulled up, Long Jack,” I exclaimed, as I saw a certain well known tandem, *only* carrying four, making the best of its way to the bed of a nullah, which bounds the parade ground upon its farthest extremity, having quitted the high road at the pleasure of the horses, and already within a stone’s throw of the threatened danger. Aye, aye, colonel, thought I, you are a little older than that colt you are mounted on; look out, for he does not seem to admire the palanquin coming towards you. At this moment, the brigade major took off his hat, as he approached the commandant, to give him a friendly recognition,—waved it,—round goes the charger,—the compliment, like many others, though well intended, fails in its intention,—and to my horror the colonel is prostrated. The whole scene now gathers into one spot; some express their sorrow, others cannot dissemble sufficient, for I am sure that is the smile of satisfaction I see upon the countenances of the two to the right;

aye, let me see, so they are the very two who got the reprimand for hunting a fox into a well, and thereby polluting it in the eyes of the natives. God bless me, here comes a palanquin. I suppose the old boy's leg is broken; but no, it can't be though, for his favorite horsekeeper is, as usual, giving him a lift into his saddle, as his rotundity spoils his activity. God preserve me, how furious he looks, spurring hard and reining in at the same time, whilst holding by the mane, and rolling in his saddle like a ship at sea:—"Good for the education and mouth of a young horse, is it not?" I exclaimed,—turned round for an answer,—but no one was near me. How provoking!

"Qui, hi," I roared out. "Qui, hi, Hurumz adehs. Koe ne, is there nobody in attendance whatever. Qui, hi, boy, Itherow, come here, for here they come in a crowd." "Did master call," said my servant. "Yes, I did, Mahommed." "Not at home, gone to S.—No, went out on horseback two hours ago, not returned.

If they want brandy and water, or beer, and cigars, I have got the key, you know, and I do not care if you abuse me a little for having it.—No, no, can't afford it any longer, might as well keep a tavern, as regards the quantity drank in my house without its advantages, that of immediate payment." Now came a roar, "Long Tom, where are you, lumbo,* we are thirsty." "Here, Mahommed," said a third, "where's your master?—" Out at Lieutenant G.'s."—"No," said the querist, "he is not, I have just been there." Try him upon the other tack, thought I, as I was peeping through the venetians of my bedroom. "He has been out these two hours upon horseback, Saheb."—"Why how can that be, I saw all his horses walking out." Then shut your eyes in future, thought I, or may the opthalmia deaden your sight. "No, no, Mahommed," said this knowing sub.; "your beard must grow a little longer before you can take us in. We'll in." Here

* *Lumbo*—A familiar term of salutation used towards the author, meaning—long.

they all dismounted, and demanded some cigars and grog. "This," said my servant, "you cannot have; for master has, of late, got so much of the miser, as to carry his keys with him."—"That won't do, old fellow; out with them at once," said a noisy griffin, "or trust me we will find them. Now let us begin to spend the evening. Here let us order our horses home, and wait until master comes." "No, no; let us look about for him, for you see his book is open here, and you may depend upon it our appearance scared him, like W.'s attention to the colonel, oh, what fun! did to his horse:" and he led the way to the bedroom. "Here he is: holloa, old boy, how are you? What, ashamed to see your friends? How's the fever? what says old Pills?—more calomel and less Hodgson? Oh! never mind; we'll take the latter, you the former," and a burst of laughter ushered in the host. Ere long I was president: some took tea, for which they were properly quizzed; others wine and water, which was proclaimed a sorry

mixture; whilst the far greater portion of the self-invited guests now filled their glasses with brandy and water, and emptied them in a moment after. The whole room was in a cloud of smoke, as thick and heavy as I might expect my bill to be, at the end of the month. This, however, did not in any wise disturb my usually serene disposition; although every ten minutes brought another locust, in the shape of a jolly sub., whom neither the certainty of death, nor the dread of fever, could limit in his potations of grog, and uncompromising habit of smoking. Conversation now began to grow most lively; in fact, increased in proportion to the liquor swallowed, as is the case always at a dinner party; and how far the evening would have gone to increase my expences I know not, had it not occurred that an opportune fire in the regimental lines set the drum going. The long roll burst unceremoniously upon our hearing; and who could delay, without the chance of a reprimand? Many were fearful of being distinguished in orders

with an appropriate eulogy; others were more inured to such compliments, and threatened to remain; but upon these curiosity acted, and I soon had my room to myself, as, being in sick quarters, I could add a "*non sequitur*" to the imperative calling of that melodious instrument of martial music.

It was not long ere the adjutant of the regiment came up to inform me how many muskets had been destroyed. Being somewhat communicative, although an absent man, he endeavoured to picture to me the results of the fire, in the confusion and hurry it occasioned; but his mind, bent upon many subjects at once, and not clearly understanding any, it was too confused a narrative to be embodied here. The most forcible thought which came to his recollection, was the absence of a Manilla from his mouth; he, therefore, seized the box left by the late visitors at one angle of the table, made a choice, threw his legs upon the green baize, and puffed a cloud.

“What did you do,” said I, “at the meeting of the members of the Union Hog Hunt? Any more receders, or have they fixed upon a field day? and if so, when and where, that I may be out of sick quarters in time. It’s very salutary, you know, a change of air; is it not? and old Pills, doubtless, when I have succeeded in getting a little carnation at the tip of his nose with Neufchatel, or, I may treat him with Carbonel on such an occasion, may be outwitted; at all hazards I must try.”

“True, and so do,” said my friend; “and, by way of a help, for I am always the adjutant in what I do, recollect I would advise you to have him to an evening party, for he loves, when he has not to pay for it, a cup of good coffee. Besides, you can then gradually introduce the subject; and Pills is a droll one in truth, and not so easily played upon. By heavens, the Hog Hunt is upon its last legs. Such bickering as there was this morning; it almost threatened to kindle up into a duel. This

man left, and the other dissuaded ; one swore, and the other joked ; another was for a field day ; whilst the treasurer declared the funds to be insolvent. Paddy was for making them do ; but this was impracticable, as the balance of the credit side exhibited a debt. Droll enough, you'll say ; but so it was. As for seceders, they thickened upon us. There was old What's-his-name ; he said he was no huntsman. Old Scrupulous found his means insufficient to advance six shillings a month. Old Selfish did not see why he should be called upon to furnish sport for others, when his duties hardly admitted of his ever leaving camp. In fine, there is no hope of continuing it, unless done regimentally. And then, again, the Cricket Club ; it is also on the decline : so many have been unjustly bowled out, or the sides are so unequal, and the weather so hot ; that it must, like the rest of our amusements, sink into disrepute. The bats and balls are also worn out, the brigade parade ground must not be cut up, the finances

are at the lowest ebb, and doubtless, ere long, we shall require new wickets. Who can stop, says one, a ball bowled by the adjutant? or who is to run after one struck by the quarter-master? and who likes to interpose himself as a stop to what, if it strikes him, may fracture a limb? No, Tom, it is all up now; we must take to gardening or pigeon-shooting, or depend upon the accidental cropping and docking of a raw pony for amusement. As for the library, it never can boast of a new publication; and the Bengal Hurkaru, the only paper worth reading, is voted to be discontinued, because here, again, it can't be afforded. There is not a single pair of boxing gloves in camp; and as for my foils, the only ones within a circuit of three hundred miles, they have been so often mended, that the armourer declares he can weld them no more." Here he paused, and relit his cigar. "Well," said I, "then old Pills gets none of my generous liquor; for, in this case, sick quarters are the best that can be inhabited. I am not, believe

me, over anxious to march round, and salute the commanding officer every day in the week, to the tune of the British Grenadiers, and the Quick March, in that old fusty piece the Battle of Prague. No, never, for it only leads to a day's drill at the sword exercise in the mess-room, for a bad salute, or elicits a grin of disgust from the bystanders. Wait; a thought strikes me; I'll write a novel! Let me see, what shall it be—Zenghis, the beloved; no, that's effeminate: the warlike; no, that's to unpromising: neither will do, Eastern love, or the manners of the age we live in,—”

“ We starve in—you should say, old boy,” said my guest. “ What with clipping and cutting, we shall soon know starvation, believe me. Why, last month, my mess bill was twice my pay; and if Bal-lumjee had not softened down his refusal to lend me 2000 rupees, into the loan of 500, my servants would have lived upon air, unless their credit exceeds their mas-

ter's in the bazaar. But a novel! Yoicks, a novel!" and he drew back his legs, again extended them, upset the plated branch candlesticks, broke the shades, (which, by the bye, were not paid for) and, throwing his chair off its balance, fell back, sweeping with his arm, cigars, tumbler, and all, upon the floor, where he remained in a fit of laughter, repeating "a novel! a novel!" over and over again, unable to rise, and unwilling to attempt it.

"What the deuce ails you, man?" I exclaimed, as I relit the candles, which Mahommed in vain attempted. "Get up, confound you! or I swear I'll douse the coujah* of water over you. What is there so very wonderful in writing a novel, that, even at the very mention of it, you break every thing within your reach, except your thick, invulnerable head, which I suppose I shall have to do for you in the end. Now, get up at once."

Coujah.—A vessel for cooling water in.

“No, not a bit of me. A novel! a novel! Well may I be surprised when I hear you assert such a thing. Why, the critics, man, would have—but wait till I am on my legs again, the posture most adapted to an orator. The critics, I say, would have such a dish to feed off, as seldom, if ever, fell to their lot before. Why, Tom, they’d cut you up right and left, with ‘Here’s a sentence for you;’ then they would make a quotation, ending their remarks with ‘pack of nonsense; not a single thought, either expressed or understood.’”

“All very true, Mr. Adjutant,” I rejoined: “but I cannot help that, and shall be only very glad if I can contribute to some of the monthly magazines, in furnishing the editor a handle to lay hold of. What can exceed a good stiff, well-written critique, such as the one you shewed me the other day? It helps an author on in correcting his style. But, joking apart, I shall make the attempt: so, here goes. Mahommed, sheaey cullum kargus,” and

pens, ink, and paper, were instantly produced by my servant. "But now," I continued, "joking apart, what is your opinion? Does not this country offer some novelty, for an English reader to be amused with?"

"That it does, old boy; but can you describe it in a manner suitable and appropriate? There is style wanting, you know, to keep up with the advancement of literature; your buts, althoughs, and ifs, must not be too numerous, but the whole narrative present a chain of communicative language, without any clumsy links being apparent; to which I would liken a succession of broken phrases, and endless string of parenthesis."

"All this I am fully aware of, and will try to avoid. If I fail the first time, perhaps the second may succeed."

"True," rejoined my guest. "That much new information may be granted,

who can deny? For instance, if I was relating in London, to a party of fire-side travellers, that I rode out to a pic-nic, in Bill's Nibs, they would stare at the expression, and could not get on without explanation. Again, if I said the coolie brought this, and my begarrie that, or my ghorawallah led my horse to the door, which, from custom, I, doubtless, in my relations, should name them as, why, I must set to, to unravel the mystery, and perhaps, being an absent man, forget what I had to say; which makes the person look very foolish, when the company is all anxiety, and the feigned cough is a delay insufficient to recal the intended story to recollection. Upon these grounds, I think, Tom, you had better make the attempt, as it will save me trouble on my return home; for if any of my friends pester me, I shall have a book to refer them to."

"And so I will, believeme," I replied. "So here goes.—'It was on a stormy night,'—No that won't do; what have you written?"

“ ‘ Drenched with rain.’ Quite a similarity of ideas, a kind of *sequitur* to what you have ; so whilst you are at the first, I can manage the second volume.” “Fire away then,” I continued. “ A weary traveller having ascended a mountain pass,” “and whose garments were thoroughly soaked,” he added, saying,—“ There’s another palpable hit. Oh, Sir, it will do. Trust me for the third volume. Was seen toiling slowly”—“ His horse fatigued,” I read aloud, “ as well as himself,” my friend repeated ; “ and only persevere, Tom, the thing will do, I see.” Here he swallowed his grog, called his horse-keeper, roared out “ The novel—here goes—on a stormy night—what is it—will do any thing in my power to assist you—only command me—good night,” and off he went.

And thus commenced the present undertaking, although my friend has not made any such felicitous hits, since I recommenced with the intention of publishing my ideas, as characterized the evening in India which I have described.

My return to England, gave my friend the adjutant's arguments additional value. I found that few indeed, comparatively speaking, were at all acquainted with what an Indian life developes, and that in the course of common conversation, so much explanation is necessary, that I was induced to believe, what I could present might be of some value. I have no pretension to any thing but a patient perusal, and let my reader, in following my descriptions of scenes, draw his own conclusions from them, bearing in mind, that each particular one is intended to describe some one of the emotions of the human mind, as they exist in the native of India, where education, and society of a nature suitable to temper a dread of revenge, or restrain the hand of passion, have been wanting, and where force usurped the place of justice, and "might was right," in the days in which the Mahommedan hero's adventures occurred.

Wherever an Eastern phrase is encoun-

tered in the following pages, read it, as you would any other, without attaching any very peculiar emphasis or sound to particular letters and syllables, as I have spelt such words as compose it, just as fancy dictated and the sound appeared most to resemble that of the original it is intended to represent.

Sincerely grateful for the most distinguished favor granted me by their Most Gracious Majesties, in allowing my work to be forwarded to their librarian, and for the kind patronage I have received from those whose names are upon my list of subscribers,

I remain,

With all respect,

T. H. O.

12, *Sloane Street*,

28th *March*, 1831.

RUSTUM KHAN.

CHAPTER I.

A STORM AND SHELTER.

WITH the dawn of day the tempest began to moderate. The angry billows, crested with foam, which had lashed the sides of the *patamar** during the night time, threatening to overwhelm whatever came within their yawning

* *Patamar*, an Indian vessel, with very sharp bows, slanting mast, and high stern. It hauls extremely close to the wind. Burthen from fifteen to seventy or eighty tons. The sailors invariably keep them in a very bad and unserviceable state; one in which the author left Surat, in 1824, had a piece of block tin nailed over a large hole in her bottom.

troughs, by degrees subsided as the day-light increased. The sweeping blasts of the midnight hurricane ; the raging sea, summoned at their call, had alike suspended their terrific strength, and were again almost simultaneously lulled into repose. Confidence was renewed within the breasts of the affrighted crew, and unavailing prayers and superstitious vows were superseded by active exertion. The sailors no longer continued either to rave aloud, or to sit in moody silence, as they had done during the darkness of the preceding night,—when, as either actuated by hope, they called blessings on their patron gods, or goaded by despondency, hurled curses numerous and revolting on their offending heads. A little bustle gave animation to their former care-worn countenances ; whilst, at lengthened intervals, a boisterous laugh at the conclusion of a jest, or unrestrained tokens of joy at their surprising deliverance, tended yet further to heighten their smiles, and bring back their wonted serenity. The native Indian is a mixture of extremes, ever gay, or always sad,—elevated to the highest pitch, or proportionably irrecover-

ably dejected for the time : chameleon-like, with each ray of the sunshine of prosperity, or the darkness of adversity, they assume a different shade of character, yet more various, if possible, than the colours assumed by this extraordinary animal. The terrors of the ocean—the boisterous gale, and sudden squall—alike, in their angry moments, bear down the spirits of an Indian sailor ; and the most precarious hours of a mariner’s life, the time of storm and tempest, too generally, in hastening on, witnesses from those exposed to its violence, even when on the brink of destruction, nought but the indulgence of sorrow, as insincere, perhaps, as unavailing. Or perhaps, again, the victim, when engulfed in the bosom of the mighty deep, is received into it in a state of abject indifference, or with revilings against his God upon his tongue, whether in the case of a mussulman or an idolater.

Timid in the extreme was the tindal* and

* *Tindal*, the navigator and head man of the patamar, whose authority over his crew is very limited. He depends solely upon land-marks to guide and direct him in his coasting voyages.

his associates, with whom I sailed on the present occasion. I had a knowledge of this awakened in me on a prior occurrence. When quitting the harbour of Bombay, we had struck on the reef opposite the light-house, where, from want of their exertions, we might have remained for ever, for neither hand nor foot could I prevail on them to stir, in furtherance of our rescue, which, in the end, was solely effected by the efforts of my servants. When the storm came on, from the effects of which we were now recovering, this, like the phantom of a murdered friend, rose at once, to banish any confidence I might otherwise have been inclined, in the terror of the moment, to indulge. The hurricane came on as sudden as unexpected; its raging violence swept all before it; whilst the infirm and shattered vessel reeled to her side, as each blast, in sweeping past, gave her a portion of its irresistible strength;—now righting for a moment, and now again plunging her cadgan-built* gunwale into the ocean,

* *Cadgan*-built gunwale.—A portion on either side of these vessels, is left without any planking, to admit

she continued, like a drunken man, her efforts to preserve her balance. The main-sail, clumsily fastened, could not be lowered, and we were indebted to the fury of the winds for being disencumbered of it.

Yet, with all these frightful truths before them, of the certainty of their fate, not a soul offered any assistance, or even seconded my efforts. Useless as they might have been, I hoped a good example would have a corresponding influence, in producing energy ; but, no,—I had to contend against an apathetic indifference, never to be mastered. All remained deaf alike to my entreaties or menaces ; blinded by despair, in fate alone they trusted, yet if an adverse one, they sought by invocations to arouse their slumbering idols in their behalf, or by vows to soften the rigours of their vengeance. And yet the wind continued, to their amazement and horror, as violent as before ; whilst each succeeding wave, as it bore us vio-

of the cargo. When all is on board, this is filled in with *cadgan*, the dried leaf of the cocoa supported by bamboo framing.

lently onwards, or cast us drifting to the lee, yet towered higher, and presented a more surgy crest, than its predecessor. The noise of human voices—the screams of females, for each of my servants had one, and several two—the kicking of my horses below—the fury of the elements—and the creaking of the tottering mast, as we laboured onwards, raised a confusion beyond description. Passing flashes of lightning lighted up for a moment the scene before me, whilst steering the vessel with an inexperienced hand, I continued to pilot her as chance directed, or the wayward fancy of the winds impelled. The dark gloom of despair sat furrowed on each brow; energy was paralysed; and my own mind was fast mingling with the hopelessness of my situation, the bitter idea of the inutility of human aid.

“Would to God!” I mentally exclaimed, “that the tindal had been long since engulfed, or rather, that I had turned back when freed from the reef near Bombay, and proceeded by land;” and then again I blamed the local government for a want of proper caution, in providing such vessels for their servants and

officers, proceeding on duty : now my thoughts turned, with furious wrath, against the idle, profligate, useless crew : and now again, almost thrown down by the pitching and tossing of the vessel, I endeavoured to maintain my station at the helm, whilst yet the planks held together. Whither I was steering I knew not. The night was dark beyond compare, and not a star shone in the firmament. Whether we were going northward or southward, or in a westerly or easterly direction, could not be determined, having no compass to steer by. At sunset our position had been determined by the tindal, and those acquainted with the different landmarks, on the shore, lit up with the last parting rays of the sun, to be some eight or ten miles up the gulph of Cambay, which yet increased the danger of our situation, as the gulph affords but little sea-room for scudding before a gale, and its passage in the best of times is more than intricate, from the numerous sand-banks and sandy shoals abounding throughout.

The tides are rapid in the extreme, and the

bore* which accompanies its flow, awful to hear at a distance, but still more dangerous to encounter, should the vessel, with the ebb, have been left embedded in the mud. Hour after hour passed on; with hope renewed, I rallied, but only with each succeeding heave and pitch again to indulge despair. The long-bending mast at length broke away from the cordage which had hitherto sustained it, and fell overboard with a crash, which seemed the knell of our destruction. My affrighted horses, unconscious of that fear which stifled the screams of the human travellers, broke loose from their confinement, and fought with animated fury, unheeded by my servants, all of whom were engaged in clearing the ponderous log from en-

* *Bore*, a rush of water, accompanying the influx of the tide. Near Cambay, the vessels lay embedded in mud, until the bore, in passing, floats them at once. If, in making this port, you cannot with one tide reach it, it becomes necessary to regain, if possible, the mouth of the gulf; otherwise, with the returning tide, the vessel might be swamped. The noise which accompanies the bore is heard at a distance of several miles.

cumbering the lee of the vessel. The side of the patamar sustained considerable damage, although, to what extent, we then neither dared nor desired to be made acquainted. Thus each moment yet further added to our dismay, and closed by degrees the door against all hope. "Let go the anchor!" I roared in accents of thunder: the tindal remonstrated, and Mahomed, my servant, was ordered to beat him into silence, and obey my commands. Each of my household row hurried to the spot where the anchor was placed, and in a moment a frightful splash convinced me my dependants had done their duty. Instantly quitting my hold of the helm, she swung round to the force of the tide, and brought us safely to; although the cable, old and rotted in appearance, strained to its utmost, seemed miraculously to have withstood the shock for the moment, only to abandon us again to the mercy of the wind and waves in another. Such, however, to make use of an eastern phrase, was not written on our foreheads; or rather, our fate was otherwise ordained, and we continued to hold during the night-time, until relieved from the irksome

darkness and threatening danger at "the dawn of day."

"Saheb,"* said my horsekeeper, who descended to the bottom of the hold to quiet the horses, and again fasten their head and heel ropes, "all is at an end, the vessel is filling with water, Array! array!† where is my wife, what will become of us? Array! array! what shall we do? Where is my son Kalloo, bring him to me? Oh, bring him to me, Oh, bring him to me." The women now recommenced their piercing shrieks, as if new calamities had furnished fresh vigour to their exclamations. And yet, not one of the crew, seemed at all awakened into a sense of his awful situation. My station at the helm, hitherto prevented my appealing to their feelings in a more sensible mode than by expostulation, but now I was at liberty, and the fear of drowning silenced all scruples. Seizing a bamboo, I commenced

* *Saheb*,—always used in addressing an European; equivalent to *Sir*.

† *Array, array*,—an exclamation of surprise, fear, joy, &c.

stumbling from one end of the vessel to the other, laying unmercifully upon every thing I encountered in the way, which offered the slightest appearance of a human being, but nowhere could I meet the infatuated tindal. Nothing daunted by miscarrying at first, I at last found him, and laid on him with unremitting violence, (in spite of his assurances of setting to baling immediately, and doing any thing to please master,) until the baling commenced, when I only applied the philosophic rod, as each or any deserved it from laziness. Experience told me that shipwrecks with all their horrors are too generally experienced in untoward weather, with an Indian crew: and I believe it is more the want of energy on the part of the crew, master, and sailors, than the violence of the weather, to which they ought to be attributed. I cannot depict all the miseries borne up against during this night, the various expedients resorted to, and calamities sustained; or the fluctuations from confidence to despair, from hope to desperation, originating with the momentary calms after the violence of the

blast, or the approaching hissing of the coming gusts.

The welcome light of day came on, the ocean lay around, still considerably agitated,—the wind yet blew strong, but had become more steady, and a happy termination to our voyage was to be anticipated. Under such auspices, the sunken spirits of the crew rallied; the cheering prospect gave them renewed vigour, and as the favourable weather yet further increased, they momentarily shook off their panics, and displayed some reliance upon the value of their labours. All was activity and bustle; a jury-mast was erected; a portion of an old sail bent upon the bamboo used for fathoming, but now converted into a yard, usurped the place of what the winds had despoiled us of, and was sufficient to ensure our progress. The anchor was weighed; the cry, “Array Ullah! array Illah! array, array, Illah! zor se puckur!* re-

* *Array Ullah! Oh God!—Array Illah! Oh God!—Zor se puckur*, lay hold of it with strength.—These are exclamations which accompany the weighing of the anchor, setting sails, &c.; and answer to the nautical “music” for which our own sailors are proverbial.

sounded on all sides; whilst the craft, cleared of the water she had made, and the leak kept under, rode lightly onwards. The tindal resumed his fair weather station at the helm, a little crippled with chastisement: this, however, he soon forgot, and now, buoyed up with hope, took every advantage of the breeze, and favoured her expedition. Thus we ran along the gulf at a steady, but slow rate, scarcely averaging as much, with all our means of expedition employed, as we had done each hour previous to anchoring—yet this little was satisfactory, as the men one and all assured me we were in our right course. The first burst of sunshine tended to confirm our hopes—land appeared in the distance.* The line which it at first displayed, was scarcely sufficiently marked, for an inexperienced eye like mine. As a large mass of floating billow passed us now and then, I considered I discerned it, but a full hour elapsed ere I could place any steady reliance upon my sight. As we yet nearer approached, the tops of the date and cocoa

* This coast is particularly flat and low.

abounding on the shores of India, formed a light and airy fringe, above the surface of the ocean, and now again, they yet stole above the horizon; and as soon as we weathered the only remaining headland between our situation and the port we were making for, every trunk became visible: the cottages, embedded in the grateful shade of the lengthening groves, now rose upon the sight; the curling smoke of the expiring embers of midnight fires, mingled with the scene,—until, after hearing the lowing of cattle, and faintly distinguishing the forms of human beings attending the plough in the distance, we entered the creek, which forms the harbour of Tankaria, and ended our perilous voyage. If, during our progress onwards, our features had lost by degrees all traces of our former sorrow and fatigue, without being marked with any particular joy, our landing was an occurrence too worthy of sentiment, to be passed by unheeded. The tedium of a fourteen days' voyage, with the coast in sight always at some part of the day, and the last night's imminent peril, gave a warmth to our feelings; whilst the narrow escape we had had

from a watery grave, quite obliterated the strenuous exertions on our parts, our misfortunes had called for. The unexpected manner in which our difficulties had terminated, gave an overpowering impulse of gratitude to my mental feelings, insomuch so, that when the tindal made his salaam, accompanied with the usual demand for a bonus above his bargain, I forgot, forgave all, and lent a healing balm to the impressions of the bamboo, in a buckshish* of a few rupees. Let those who have escaped such a night of danger as I did, appreciate my motives.

The crazy patamar, with her sharp bows and high stern, roughly carved, and coated with red paint, dismasted and broken-sided, her planks sown together with cords, or rudely nailed to her beams,—lay immured in the deep mud of the creek we had anchored in; and from which the tide had in part receded. The widely extended beach lay in melancholy monotony around me: where I stood, not even a blade of grass, or moistened knot of sea-weed

* *Buckshish*,—present.

grew, to soften the bright and glaring reflection of the noon-day sun, which played over the surface of the deeply heated sand. But this was no time to waste in making observations on the adjacent country, which, in its barren appearance seemed to offer little to a weary traveller; and it was equally useless to gaze upon the Government Custom House, which beaconed me to shelter and protection. My horses and luggage were yet on board, and sad experience had taught me to place little, if any, reliance upon the spontaneous exertions of the best or worst of Indian servants. To superintend the whole was my only hope of getting any thing done,—a task disagreeable enough at all times, without the aid or inconvenience of a tropical sun to augment it. What with the exhaustion and fatigue of the preceding night, and continued labours of the day, I became wearied to distraction. In the disembarkation of my horses was centered all my anxiety, as they had become restive from confinement, and, doubtless, the affray that happened between them previously, had not allayed any of their usual fiery disposition. For

several hours before we landed, they had been continually neighing and roaring, as if sensible of the near approach to land. The bad tackle provided—the danger of the jury-mast breaking down—the stupidity of my servants, and utter ignorance of the crew in adjusting such harness as well as ropes and blocks, which formed the apparatus for raising them from the hold and lowering them to the bed of the creek,—all tended to raise my alarm, and fret me with anxiety. Thus were two hours spent, during which time my voice had become perfectly hoarse in directing the operations, with “now haul away—now lower—clear his feet—lower again—ease him off—to the right—now to the left—now cleverly, and down he lights.” What with kicking when first lifted off their legs, and then again struggling in the mud, I never anticipated to have had one serviceable for at least a month or more, especially my favourite Yaboo, whom I had kept until the last, that he might have the benefit of experienced hands. The tackle broke away in lowering him, but luckily he sustained no injury whatever. Mounting him accordingly,

I dashed on towards the inviting shelter which the house* some hundred yards in the distance served as a beacon to. But let my reader pause, before he considers me as comfortably housed as at an inn, for such accommodations are only to be found in India in the proportion of angels' visits—"few and far between." It was true I had escaped from the enervating and injurious heat in open exposure; but what a sorry and comfortless apartment presented itself for my convenience! the earthen floor was cleanly swept, it is true; but not a single chair was there on which to seat myself, not an iota of furniture, no couch on which to bask, no host to minister to my wants; no bell to ring for attendance, and if there had been, there was no one to attend my summons; whilst the absence of a well-stored larder to appease my hunger, or a well-spread cold collation, were insufferable deficiencies, and when they were to be made up I knew not. Not even, (it being

* On landing, the first house in view at a distance, is the Government Custom House, at which travellers are allowed to rest a day or two.

some Hindoo festival or village marriage, days of equal solemnity, feasting, and inconvenience, to one in my condition)—could I find any one to hold my horse, so that I can justly assert, my situation was one of little real comfort, although it embodied some which only could be appreciated when compared to actual suffering. Shelter I obtained, and that was all on which to allay hunger, thirst, and fatigue, yet was I cheerful in the absence of any expedient with which to better my condition: I received, “bad’s the best,” with patient endurance and contentment. Such is often the case in India; indeed, I may say, on duty or on pleasure, an every-day occurrence; and compelled, as an Indian traveller is, to carry about with him on his marches, all the necessities—mark me, not luxurious appendages of easy life,—all must be centered in himself: whatever accommodation he can get he must owe to his own activity, presence of mind, active preparation, or keen perception, which enables him to turn the worst to the best advantage. If, therefore, any mistake should arise on the part of servants, proverbially apathetic, doggedly

obstinate, and often self-willed, as regards the direction to be taken : or if two villages of the same name (a frequent occurrence) are in the vicinity, the traveller is left oppressed with hunger, unattended, and in a situation little removed from that of helplessness. What can, may I ask, be more harassing or more beyond the power of remedy, than, on arriving at the appointed halt, to find no vestige of your household or attendants after a sharp ride of eighteen or twenty miles, commenced with the dawn, and hurried through to avoid a scorching heat. Or again, when on the road, galloping at the instigation of hunger, and when not yet within six miles of your destination, the sun momentarily getting "hotter and more hot"—to behold at the further end of a village, your baggage halted, the bullocks straying here and there, in quest of a morsel, which is denied yourself, and your servants either busily engaged in performing their ablutions in the bed of the tank, quietly smoking their calleons,* or engaged in altercation with the patell or

* *Calleons*, pipes.

head of the village, as useless and conveniently deaf as the idol in the adjoining pagoda, concerning begarries* and guides, without whom no further progress can possibly be effected.

And then how does it end? you have to thrash the patell, collect the cattle, turn out, after a severe hunt, the men you require—who are secreted almost beyond finding, and finally linger on to your appointed ground, covered with the dust raised by the cattle's hoofs; then sit down to a hastily and badly cooked breakfast, without any appetite whatever. The first station, either military or civil, your road leads through, is the focus of complaints; from which, if you gave credence to all the learned karcoon of the village has written, in detail of calamities sustained and tyranny displayed, you might conclude the head man was assassinated, and the village at least depopulated; a reprimand ensues, as certain as possible, and your vexation overpowers all your sophistry and patience. †

† *Begarries*, a class of people always ready for hire, answering to our porters. They are a most hard-working set of men.

* I must here remark, that it often occurs, that com-

Meditating upon all this, and leaning through the window, I commenced playing with my horse. My attention was, however, principally directed, now to the village in the distance, and now to the half-hidden masts of the small craft anchored around and about the place of my disembarkation. It was for succour I was looking, and often did I long my horse could have taken a bet with me on the subject, as I was inclined to back the cupidity of the villagers finding me out first, against the chance of attention, even to their personal comforts, bringing my servant first to my aid. For some time, nothing occurred to ameliorate my forlorn, my fatiguing condition, until a groupe arrived from the quarter of the village, among whom the patell, and an aged brahmin* in

plaint and reprimand are synonymous. An European is often denied even a hearing. On one occasion, an officer, on duty, proceeding with all activity to join the forces in the province of Cutch, struck a person who refused him guides, because it was his duty to provide them, and, without whom, the government interest must have been abandoned—yet he got a reprimand.

* Brahmin, one of the sacerdotal order of the Hindoo population of India.

charge of the collection of the customs at this bunder,* were numbered. Many coolies,† some bearing wood for fuel, others grass, and several in search of a burthen, brought up the rear of the embassy. The deputies were civil and obliging,—a trait which seldom characterises such august personages; so that, with their aid, I was soon made more comfortable, had consigned my horse's bridle to another, collected my servants, got together my much damaged kit, spread the linen on the sand to dry, and ultimately got some refreshment.

It must now be explained, that the period of the hot season was fast drawing to a close, when these occurrences had their origin; that the object before whom a hastily killed, roasted, and served up fowl,—the whole arrangement performed in half-an-hour,—was placed, was an officer on his way to join his regiment. One, I may say, who was thoroughly acquainted with the nature of marching in the monsoon or rainy season; for I had, on one or two occasions, been exposed to heavy rains, sub-

* *Bunder*, port.

† *Coolie*, the same as *begarrie*.

jected to delay, kept hours without a meal, had slept in wet apparel, lost all traces of my baggage and cattle for hours, and had in the end to pay for repairs of kit, supply the place of my dead horse, when money was scarcely to be had—and wound up this chaos of evil with hours, days, and months of reflection in a sick bed; until, from too frequent repetition of the latter, I have at length been forced to visit my native home; and gaze upon society and fashion, without being enabled to mingle in the giddy dance, or festive midnight hour. Can it be matter of surprise, then, that my conversation with the Brahmin, even in the earliest moments of our acquaintance, should revert to the near approach of the much dreaded monsoon? and as these learned people either *are* judges of the weather, or always pretend to be, I was in hopes of gaining much information. The nearest route to the city of Ahmedabad,* in Guzerat, was what I most desired to be acquainted

* Ahmedabad was formerly the capital of the province of Guzerat; it attained to great splendour, but is now rapidly declining. For further information, vide “Hamilton’s East India Gazetteer.”

with ; as it was my object to avoid the station of Baroda, where a large subsidiary force is quartered, near the capital of the Guickwar's dominions. To pass this was by no means necessary, I had been led to understand, if I took the most direct route, and I could scarce think of venturing within the power of the influential kindness of my friends there, when, to delay, was to heap ills innumerable upon myself, and positive inconvenience. Not only in adopting all diligence, and the least frequented route, did I perform my duty, but by this self-denial of indulging in society, I threw aside a chaos of evil, personal risk, and pecuniary loss. The decision was prompt ; all the necessary preparations were made ; promised buckshish added speed and activity to the lazy, and rendered the mercenary more diligent than usual. Bullocks for pack carriage, carts for the more heavy baggage, coolies for camp-case and crockery, begarries for couches and chairs, were engaged for the direct and nearest road ; guides, ready to start at a moment's notice, were ordered ; the patell and Brahmin satisfied with a recompense ; and ere sunset, my baggage and

vol. I. c

servants had started, escorted by a small party belonging to my regiment, in waiting here to protect some mess stores, of genuine liquors, European preserves, and other good things, as far as head-quarters. As these articles had formed part of the cargo of the Ruparrel pata-mar, in which I was so nearly lost, I attached these soldiers to watch my own baggage, as well as that belonging to the general community of which I was a member. The head-quarters of the regiment was at a frontier station, three hundred miles from the port, and the whole way infested with Bheels* and others, to whom opportunity of plunder is the beacon to attempt the most daring and expertly-managed robberies.

* *Bheel*,—a member of a particular sect of Hindoos, famous for the daring and dexterity of their robberies.

CHAPTER II.

MARCH—GOSAYEN*—DURRUMSOLLAH†—VIEW—
ACCIDENT—GOSAYEN'S TALE.

MY bed and chair alone, of all my kit—and horsekeeper, of my establishment and followers,—remained behind, after the foregoing preparations. The servants, at starting, shewed symptoms of dissatisfaction at being so immediately despatched onwards after landing: but, as the night season is the most opportune for marching, during the hottest months of the year in India, and my object was expedition, I saw little obstacle in their resentment, to prevent me from putting into execution measures as unpleasant to myself as

* *Gosayen*,—wandering enthusiast and devotee Hindoo.

† *Durrumsollah*,—a place appropriated in almost every village for devotees and travellers.

to others. After a few hours' hastily snatched rest, I suited my departure accordingly ; and the first nine miles of my journey were completed in the quiet stillness of a moonlight night. A few paces in front of me strode on a hardy Bheel, whose occupation was to serve as guide to travellers ; as a remuneration for which, certain immunities were, I believe, granted him, on the part of government. His clothing was scanty in the extreme ; nothing but a dhotie or waistcloth covered any portion of him. His frame was thick-set, his stature short, whilst his agility and speed on foot were alike astonishing. On him, for some time, I bent my chief attention, lest he should abandon me in an unguarded moment. But when suspicion was lulled by his willing behaviour, I was enabled to make more general observations. Although thin in the extreme, his muscle rose in proportion to his active life. His step was firm and nimble, although the sandy roads, parched up with the intensity of the summer heats, offered but a frail and slippery surface on which to tread. With a Bheel bow and arrows in the left hand, he remained prepared to resist attack from man or wild beast ; his shield

hung suspended from his left shoulder, upon his back ; a quiver occupied the place upon the right one, whilst his eye incessantly scanned every suspicious portion of the highway our progress developed ; but more particularly such as were better known to him from traditionary accounts, as mostly selected for the perpetration of robbery and murder, as offering brushwood for concealment, or low underwood intercepting pursuit, and opening into a country intersected with ravines, as numerous as intricate. Happily, however, our own mistrust was our sole tormentor on this occasion : on we passed, through lanes, under the overhanging boughs of trees, and down steep ravines, without any opportunity occurring for the exhibition of my prowess, or his fidelity, until a village, appearing a little on the right-hand, presenting one broad mass of shade, except the side of the stucco covered pagoda, which was lighted up with moonbeam. We had now traversed five miles. Here I exchanged this companion for another of much the same description. These guides are designated Bomeyahs, their duty, to proceed with the traveller as far as the nearest village, when, an exchange being summoned from his rest, a

relief takes place; and the guidance and safety of the traveller is transferred from the former to the latter, who, in case of an accident or misfortune befalling, would be responsible. If a robbery only, the village would be bound to trace satisfactorily the thieves to another village, or to make good a part or the whole of the damage sustained.

All care and caution soon quitted me, and the first hours of my inland journey were spent in contemplating the rich and various scenery in light and shade around me, as successively developed to my view, now partially shadowed, as the moon was veiled by a cloud, and now again bursting forth, mellowed with the moonbeam, and the brightest star-light. What a contrast to the preceding one, when angry winds and darkness reigned undisputed! The false dawn came at length to cheat me, a sight I had seldom, if ever, witnessed before, or perhaps my companions had caused it to pass by unheeded. The approach of morn was momentarily expected, and, ere long, matured from a feeble light into the glorious burst of day. The avenue of trees my way now led through lengthened its vista; object after ob-

ject by degrees began to emerge in the distance, until the whole landscape around in its various delineation of wood and grove became distinctly visible. My guide was exchanged at an indifferent collection of huts grouped together near a spot of fertile cultivation, extending along either bank of a scarcely perceptible stream, in the bed of a nullah. Here I was enabled to slake my thirst with a draught of new and delicious milk. The high-cast arab I was mounted on, took a refreshing mouthful or two from the stream as I crossed it; he snorted, neighed, and curved his crest, seemingly alive to the delight of these cool invigorating moments. By turns he displayed every symptom of restless impatience to get forward, now champing his bit, and now tossing about his head. Now again certain of the way before him, he pranced, curvetted, and lengthened out his paces, anxious to exchange the continued walk for the gratification of a trot. As I now had the village full in the front, conspicuous from the majestic group of neem trees which overshadowed the houses, with only one track leading to it, I dismissed my guide and cantered on. The light, playful action of my steed, as we

bounded over the country, quite refreshed me ; the active vaults and successive plunges required dexterous horsemanship, and soon divested my limbs of those cramped and benumbed feelings, engendered by the toilsome pace we had lingered on at during midnight. But it would not do to continue this speed up to my very halting place, consequently, when within a few minutes' gallop of the village, I pulled up, to allow my horse time to cool a little before I dismounted, and delivered him over in charge to his groom. Confinement on board had much reduced him in condition, and this slight exercise, speaking comparatively, was irksome to him, and heating in the extreme.

Winding round the banks of a circular tank, in which little water now remained, I discovered on the opposite side of it a human being, as my imagination figured the spectacle, lying under the shade of the peelow tree, much resembling the weeping willow of my native country. Curiosity tempted me to approach the spot, and humanity made me linger there. Stretched upon the ground, covered with flies, and nearly naked, I found one of those wandering Hindoo enthusiasts, a Gosayen.

Either from a love of laziness, or contemplating the forbidden pleasures and excesses of a roving life, or perhaps, not to be uncharitable, from a conviction of its future utility, he had deserted friends and home ; and now, when incapable of stirring, lay by the way side. His emaciated frame,—the bones covered with nothing but the skin and muscle, bespoke him a prey to some violent disease, to which he was about to yield ; whilst his filthy condition, and forlorn situation, without a friend or companion, yet further aggravated this scene of distress. He lay stretched upon his back, the morning sun lighting up his face ; his eyes were shut ; his Shasters, or religious volume, was compressed between his hands, which weakness forbade his raising from his breast, where they reclined ; whilst his countenance betrayed, in lieu of sorrowful expression, a patient resignation to the lot about to overwhelm him. My footsteps, for by this time I had dismounted to proffer my assistance, awoke him from the state of lethargy his misery had brought upon him ; his eye kindled into the expression of life for a moment, but with his already wasted strength, he was only able, after most strenuous and appalling

efforts, to articulate faintly. The dim hazy eye once more succeeded, and sank inexpressive far in its socket: the sharpened features and entire prostration of strength, were, at the same time, symptoms of approaching dissolution too clearly and well defined, to admit of any doubt as to the result of that struggle between life and death, of which I only witnessed the more momentous events. His wretchedness unnerved me at first: by degrees recovering, I addressed him, offering that which I had little hope he would accept,—my services towards his recovery. He gazed at me, more as if directed to the spot by the assistance of his hearing, than by the aid of his sight, and replied in a faltering broken tone, staring wildly here and there: “I am dying! I am dying!” he exclaimed, “the hand of fate and power of death is upon me: what can the help you offer avail my cause against the Omnipotent? The delirium of my fever might be abated, or a draught of water mitigate my sufferings, but such is not for me to seek.” He paused again, whilst his countenance lighted up with a smile:—“Yes, yes! but think not that I repine. The severe and voluntary trials I have imposed upon myself, in my

career in this world, will now meet their corresponding reward ; so that death is only a removal from the miseries of this existence, to the certain enjoyment of what this sacred book"—he tried to lift it, but could not—"holds forth as a recompense in the next. It"—and his voice rose at the pronunciation—"is my only hope, and how truly has it solaced me in these trying hours !"

The firmness of his manner astounded me. Fainter and more faint became his voice, as he repeated portions of his Shasters with his yet remaining strength. Again the voice was hushed, but the lips quivered with the effort to speak ;—the eyelids gradually closed over his vacant, glazed, and inexpressive eyes,—his breathing became thick and confused,—ere long all was over ; the hand of death had claimed its long-watched victim ; the frailty of our mortal tenure was once more proved ; and the Gosayen, ere I quitted, was a cold and stiffened corpse.

It was too much : the reflections this scene awakened in my mind, the conclusions which forced themselves upon my notice, the unbending firmness, and complete reliance of this idolater upon what he considered sacred, might,

to many of an opposed religion, have been of essential service. Anxious to obliterate the sensations thus called into action, I hurried from the spot, and plunged once more into the society of the living world. Once more I regained the road, neared the outskirts of the village, saw the dependant state of man delineated in the busy scene before me ;—the farmer labouring, the herdsman driving his numerous cattle forth to pasture, were among the first objects familiar to my sight, that I gazed upon. The droves of cattle, in regard to numbers and variety, are truly surprising to behold, and held a claim upon my attention. The sullen, slothful, heavy-looking buffalo, herded with the lighter bullock, seemed more than ordinarily loathsome in appearance, from the striking contrast, whilst the incessant shouting of the herdsman, and frequent application of his staff, necessary to induce these unwieldy animals to urge forward towards the common pasture, bore proof to their generally apathetic disposition. It must be understood that the coombie* of Guzerat, who generally

* *Coombie*—A race of cultivators, so styled in these provinces.

superintend and manage the cultivation of the country, have a particular aversion to slaughter any animal, especially cattle. Those worn out in agricultural pursuits and laborious toil, become pensioners, and graze with the general herd, and all are allowed the privilege of falling by a natural death, even when, from being maimed, it would be charitable to kill them. Those deformed, at the time of birth, even, are allowed to live on:—and this exists in, or on the borders of, a province where, not many years since, every female child was sacrificed at the time of its nativity. Such is the force and power of custom over minds untutored, and unable, from judgment, to draw just and proper conclusions. If, therefore, the seasons are pretty free from any contagious disease among the cattle, the rains abundant, and pasture plenty, these droves annually increase and multiply to a degree both surprising and bearing little accordance with the few inhabitants contained in the dirty reed-built villages, from which, in the midst of clouds of dust, they may be seen daily emerging.

Banyans,* pilgrims, horsemen, travellers, and

* *Banyans*—Merchants.

fakers* passed me in succession on the road, each bestowing on me either a salaam, curse, or mere look, as he came up, until I alighted at a caravanserai, or rather durrum sollah, attached to a pagoda, over which a grateful shade was preserved by the thickset foliage of a banyan tree; which, in return, received from the tiled roof of the buildings around, a support for some of its numerous pendant suckers; many of which, again, amongst the first thrown out by the parent tree, had taken root immediately around the main stem, so that, perhaps, when I again visit this spot, they may mislead me, by rivalling in their size the parent one. My morning's ride had brought me clear of the more barren track near the sea-shore of Tankaria Bunder, towards the fertile portion of the country intervening between that port and the north-western division of Guzerat. The road I had traversed, and that which yet remained for me to pass over, possesses the most beautiful and striking features of park and woodland scenery: beauties abound in every direction, and to what

* *Fakers*—Mahommedan enthusiasts.

other than the bountiful hand of Nature can we ascribe such romantic perfections? for the poor Hindoo, to whom his own exertions in cultivation alone ensures a livelihood for himself and family, can afford little time, and has less taste to bestow in improvements:—All is Nature:—all, unless where a straggling hedge of dried thorn, or green and fresh milkbush, offers itself for the eye to gaze upon. The wildness of arrangement, the grandeur spread over the face of this country, the luxuriant underwood, ever partially in blossom, and the mighty forest trees, would at once solve the doubts even of a sceptic upon the subject. Gaze upon the efforts of man, and corresponding effect throughout the landscape produced, it may be pretty, yet can scarcely be called majestic: so many tastes differ, that incongruities exist; but in this portion of the world, the arm—the power—of the Omnipotent, can be traced throughout in uniformity and overwhelming grandeur. Numerous and deep are the beds of the water-courses; many the natural drains for the country in ravines, crossing each other in varied angles, until they find the

mighty stream which finally mingles with the deep, and prevents the heavy rains from producing deluge.—Gaze but upon it, and you will allow it to be as idle as useless to raise any chimera, imputing to man's taste or industry the achievements of such pastoral scenes. Well may Guzerat be styled the garden of the Western Presidency!—the cultivator has the slightest labour compensated with an ample harvest; his agricultural utensils are rude and uncouth in the extreme; manuring but seldom, comparatively speaking, resorted to, and yet, such are the fertile resources of this rich soil, that it requires little more from the hand of man, than to furrow up the surface, sow the grain, wait the periodical supply of water, and see the ripening crops await his sickle. Yet, thus highly gifted, it has its drawbacks: the climate is rendered peculiarly obnoxious to the human constitution from the virulent miasma occasioned by the decay of the rank and superabundant vegetation: without this it is a land that might be sighed for. The sportsman, the naturalist, the farmer, and the painter, might each pursue his

occupation with pleasure or profit, whilst the romantic Miss of sixteen, might sigh with love in the evergreen groves of the mango tree, mingling her plaintive note with those of the bulbul or nightingale; or, in less anxious moments, join the warbling of the choristers perched above, whilst she struck the light guitar in the rural halls, formed by the fantastically shaped, and thickly spread, pendant suckers of the banyan tree. But I am digressing. Once more unto my tale.—I entered the building: at one corner my table was arranged with as much neatness as time and circumstances permitted, or the owner desired. A subaltern's breakfast-table, when on the line of march, and I may even add, when in cantonments, seldom presents sufficient variety to require any procrastinated debate upon the qualities of the dishes, previous to choice. The more immediate task of satisfying hunger, if the climate has left you any, is, therefore, soon completed, where a newspaper is wanting to make you trifle the moments away, or digest national politics as well as your food. In the present instance, although surfeited with leisure, I could only

manage to kill a few minutes together with my appetite. As my servant began to remove, I passed on and seated myself under the protection of the arched gateway built of stone, which served as an entrance to the enclosure around the temple and durrumsollah, directing my observation on one side to my horsekeeper grooming my horse, and on the other to the tank beneath me, in which the water had much receded, owing to the summer droughts. Throwing myself back in my surrattee arm-chair, and erecting my feet on a stone placed horizontally across the door-way, to prevent cattle intruding, I enjoyed a cigar as well as the pleasing sight of active bustle reigning everywhere in my presence, on the opposite bank, in the bed and water of the tank,* and at the focus of attraction, the village well. Full-grown females, in the prime of life, those verging onward towards womanhood, with their elegant robes waving in the wind, as well as their children in their train, were actively busied in filling their earthen, brazen, and copper

* *Tank*—Ponds. Applied generally to any accumulation of water, in which there is no current.

vessels with a sufficient supply of water for the family consumption until sun-set; others, again, were washing their garments; some remained seated in, and covered with, the water, until the various portions of their only change, if it may be termed, of raiment, was spread by a friend on the bank to dry, or, perhaps, swung to and fro, by two females, to hasten its so doing. Men, women, and children were promiscuously bathing and refreshing themselves: amongst them, the Brahmin was throwing water upon his head, or diving it with incredible rapidity, at each moment, under the water, now folding his arms, and now extending them. Ever and anon a traveller gave a draught to his thirsting animal, whilst he himself, bared his arms, took off his pugrie,* and performed his ablutions. A moment after, a small troop of Guickwar horsemen descended to the water's edge, clad in armour, or dressed as fancy directed, order being unknown to such warriors; one had a matchlock;† another, two swords;

* *Pugrie*—a long cloth, wound round the head. Each caste has its own particular form.

† *Matchlock*—a species of fire-arm, long barrel, and carries a very small ball.

some, both, with the addition of a *peishculz** in his girdle ; whilst one, more daring than the rest, or whose fury was uncontrollable, and desire for blood unappeasable, had each and all of these murderous weapons, besides a brace of pistols. Many an imprecation and continued jingling of bells ushered into appearance a four-wheeled *rhut*,† drawn by bullocks with painted horns tipped with brass. The whole of this car was canopied over, and the beauties my figurative imagination painted to me as forming the load for the fatigued animals, were carefully concealed from view by red curtains, festooned above, and closely seamed together. I could, I thought, discern a peeping eye or two (it might be fancy, or a spice of vanity) directed to the beholder—to myself. Thus were they hidden from the gaze of the curious, as they wound their way, jolting along, down the bank ; the water's edge was soon reached, and the driver, conceiving it possible to save himself the trouble of washing the

* *Peischulz*—a kind of dagger.

† *Rhut*—a sort of carriage or platform, on four wheels.

wheels, commenced his journey through the centre. Now goading, now swearing, now screwing the tails of the oxen, he made but slow progress, when, shocking to relate, over went the whole concern: the ladies were unceremoniously soused, whilst the affrighted bullocks, tore off with the vehicle, water splashing on all sides, and every instant fraught with destruction. The female servants who were in attendance, screamed and beat their breasts, as from a distance on the shore, they beheld the catastrophe. The guards, in this hour of distress, were mute with surprize, except one who drew his sword—whether to sacrifice the maidens for exposing themselves, or rather for being exposed, I cannot say ;—or to immolate himself, it might have been:—the finish of the business was, Mahomed my head servant, myself, horse-keepers, and bearers, relieved the distressed, and were rewarded with smiles of favour. The men were rude and surly, one impertinent, who, although armed, received my blow as kindly as it was meant, and did not again repeat his abuse, at all events in our hearing. Much amused, I regained my former position, from which I continued my observations.—Now

came a Howdahed elephant, richly caparisoned, and, without exception, the tallest I ever saw; drawing his trunk full from the muddy and disturbed water, he again threw it, not only over himself, but over many within his reach. The mahawut* reproved him, and as if sensible of error, he discontinued. As one group of the village females departed, another came up, so that the contemplation of their beauty alone served as a pastime to an indolent Sub; whilst again, to contrast their variety of form, step, and carriage, with the infirmities of old age and decrepitude, for many grey-headed females and white-bearded sages, mingled in the scene, gave an additional zest to my humour. There is an elasticity and gracefulness about the native Indian women, which, combined with their light and almost fairy tread, is particularly striking; and yet they are enabled to undergo fatigue, support calamity, and bear such weighty burthens on considerable journeys, as would rather prove them, for their stature, herculean than effeminate. Where is the country, thought I, that can, in its general popu-

* *Mahuwut*.—An elephant driver.

lation, boast of so much easy manner and natural beauty? Where can the fair sex be more truly prepossessing in appearance, than the gay, thoughtless, and indifferent beings my gaze rested upon, alike untrammelled with folly and fashion, as unhampered in dress ; their wants few indeed, and luxury unknown to them. The clear water from the well, an unleavened cake, or curry of wild vegetables, is their plain, but highly relished dinner ; and their thoughts, truly centered in their family, they would bare their necks to the destroyer to save a child. In lieu of the many hours spent in visiting, riot, balls, masquerades, and operas, their time is passed, from dawn till sunset, in useful pursuits, whilst early sought sleep again nerves them for the exertions of the following day. Nervous sensations have, in India, no where from whence consolation can be obtained ; chymists' shops are not to be met with at every angle you turn, nor is there a host of surgeons to assist the needy, or dress ghastly wounds—and yet the females are happy, they need not their children dressed the gayest of the gay :—no, if blessed with vigour, it is all they ask ; and in the hour of their birth, they need not the an-

xious friend to watch them on the pillow of agony, or mitigate the trying time; they have no palliatives to soften the rigours of their case—indeed I may say, from what has come under my own observation of the unbending firmness of the female character in India, that it must be seen to be duly appreciated. Yes, fair sex, I admire you, your patriarchal customs, and your patient endurance of all you have to encounter.—The feet, ancle, and waist of a fair Brahminee, and indeed of almost all, is perfect symmetry, whilst the hand and wrist are cast in a mould of elegance far superior to that, from which, in other countries, these beauties are derived.

An old Gosayen from the interior accosted me, just when I had arranged myself to perfection for an hour or two's rest, requesting permission to pass by, in prosecution of his daily demands upon the villagers; to give which charity is strictly enjoined upon all Hindoos, upon the plea of these enthusiasts being so absorbed in contemplating the Deity, that it would be a sacrilege to refuse them the means of ensuring their own salvation. Thus, under the cloak of religion, many obtain a sumptuous livelihood without any

exertion. "Ram Ram Saheb,"* said the old man, "would you prevent a Gosayen from passing you? Array Baba Jee,† rise whilst I pass on." Still I hesitated, although I could not but admire his independent manner, so different from what is generally experienced from a native. His countenance was weather-beaten, his frame lean and lank, his limbs athletic, marked with many a scar, indicating the use of firing for curing lameness and sprains, and although advanced in years, his body appeared robust; so that, doubtless, when in the vigour of youth, untried by infirmity, inured to constant exercise, and proof against exposure, he must have been the pride and envy of his mendicant tribe. A recollection flashed across my mind of the dead Gosayen, whose corpse, exposed to the rapacious attacks of jackalls and beasts of prey, was too revolting an idea, and urged me to disclose the occurrence to the old man. Besides I wanted employment, and felt inclined to converse, even with an object, who

* *Ram Ram Saheb*.—A Hindoo salutation.

† *Array Baba Jee*.—A kind of familiar and conciliatory manner of address, answers to—Oh, my son.

would on other occasions have been driven from my door. What better treatment do such require when asking charity, in the prime of life, unhurt by disease, and whose occupation neither benefits their fellow-creatures, nor perhaps themselves?

My tale finished, "Array, array," exclaimed he, "and is he then dead? this I must confess is rather sooner than I expected. Let me acquaint you, Saheb," continued he, "that I have shared with him my daily portion for the last fourteen days. At first he profited willingly of the sustenance I procured for him, but latterly nothing could prevail on him to do so. What I had placed by his side one day, if any remnant had escaped the rapacity of the wolves and foxes, I removed the next, and gave him a fresh supply. Often have I entreated of him, to allow of my bringing him to this sacred spot, to mitigate the rigours of his sufferings; but no! the exposed and comfortless situation he had chosen to place himself in, had charms upon his mind, more powerful than my persuasions to abandon it, and held him fixed in his determination, either to recover or perish there. 'Here I will die,' he would exclaim, 'if it

be God's will ; and I hope my trials will be considered, and my reward hereafter be greater.' And such shall he obtain without doubt; wandering from place to place, abandoning the comforts of this life, subsisting solely on charity, visiting holy places, are with us:"—here his voice was accented, and he pointed to his own breast;—"voluntary penances in this life, befitting us for additional pleasures in the next existence."

"But who," interrupting him, I inquired, "will see his funeral obsequies performed?"

"That will I do," he quickly retorted, "although it is not in the right of a Sonyassey* Gosayen, and Fakeer, to expect such ceremonies. If the essential essence of the soul be preserved, what signifies the body? Devoted to austerity, pursuing tedious and unknown journeys, without companions, and through desert ways, liable to attack from rapacious wild beasts ; who can watch the dying moments of a devotee, or who pay the tribute of respect to his remains."

As the old man was well acquainted with the Hindoostanee language, I was enabled to coax him

* *Sonyassey*.—Another class of religious mendicants.

into conversation gradually, by introducing questions, and feigning surprise at his answers. His leathern scrip was now laid aside; the scowl, which once mantled on his brow at the earlier period of our acquaintance, softened away into a smile; the usual animosity of sectarians was banished by my condescending manner, and the gift of a rupee, for the use of the Durrumsollah, and gave my new-made companion a strong claim upon my attention, whilst he recited the following story, in corroboration of his assertions. His sharp and piercing eye glowed with animation, and was fraught with intelligence. His recital was clear and distinct, whilst the tale itself lost nothing of its interest by his being the hero, recounting the exploits of his own countrymen in the cause of religion, for vanity and egotism were as foreign from his words and actions as from his heart.

“It so happened, some years since,” he commenced, whilst seating himself on the ground before me, “that I, in my younger days, fired with enthusiasm, and called on by fate, relinquished all the pleasures of this world, forsook my friends, renounced my relations, and determined on a pilgrimage to the far famed holy and

religiously sacred temples at Juggur Natha. I had already been marked with the heated copper stamp on my right arm, which indicates the wearer to have performed his worship at the temples of Dwarka. Besides this journey, I had, with my parents, in my most youthful days, visited the places consecrated to religion, on the mountain of Aboo, steep, abrupt, and rendered difficult of access from the numerous tribes of robbers in the immediate vicinity, and the almost impervious nature of the surrounding jungles. So mercenary are these robbers that they respect neither age nor religion, so that the devotee is as certain to be spoiled as the rich merchant, unless his staff and courage can protect him. I had bathed at the fountain source of the sacred Kistnah,* but when at last I heard of the pilgrimage to Juggur Natha, had the solemnity of the ceremonies explained, and the necessity worked upon me, of endeavouring to effect, in the cause of my religion, this journey, to gain the great rewards of an hereafter; I only considered my former feats as of mean importance and character

* *Kistnah*.—A river.

As I intended to be present at the Dole Juttra, and the distance to be accomplished was very great, I quitted this my native village at the termination of the monsoon.* Having rashly, and in the excited moments of religious fervour, embarked in this undertaking, the various hardships which delayed my progress, at first, were too much for my youthful mind to combat in patient endurance; sometimes they rendered me wavering in my counsel, at others made me relent my rashness; yet as I hourly surmounted difficulties, equal at first sight to those, which, in succeeding them, held me scared and at fault, my mind became more determined, and nerved itself at length to meet all opposition with fortitude. I knew well my character would be enhanced, and my claims upon the religious charity and reverence of my neighbours be augmented, if I could but achieve the accomplishment of such an imposing task as I had voluntarily taken upon myself. Buoyed up with such flattering prospects, my vanity worked upon me, and my religion persuaded, so that what with youth and strength, I was proof against all untoward circumstances, until when near a marshy village, the hand of disease threatened to arrest

* *Monsoon*.—Such is the rainy season termed.

my progress, if not to terminate my career. I was suddenly seized with fever, my eye-balls burnt, my pulse beat high, my limbs now shook with cold, my teeth chattered; then again, a burning heat threatened to consume me, until the perspiration, standing in huge drops on the surface of my devoted body, again somewhat relieved me, whilst exhausting its strength to resist the disease. Such was the violence of the delirium which accompanied the first attacks, that I was kept bound to the precincts of the Durrumsollah I had rested at, for several days, whilst my fellow brethren, whom chance directed there, tendered me a portion of their daily food. Two hundred coss of my journey yet remained for me to perform, and scarcely sufficient time to pass over such a lengthened tract of country. At length I set forward, and travelled on in the holy cause, regardless whether I perished or not. To gain a glimpse of the holy buildings, even if purchased with the greatest suffering, and attained to in my dying moments, was all I cared for, and all I wished. At times I relapsed; at times recovered a little; but in the end claimed my prize, and obtained it in a successful termination to my journey.

“Little interest occurs in my own part of the narrative,” continued the communicative narrator; “but it was as well, perhaps, to acquaint you with the manner in which I became a witness to the calamities, horrors, and misfortunes, I am about to relate to you. Before you can reach the sacred place I was journeying towards, when yet three days’ march distant, the road is strewn with human bones; the only visible remains of those who have sacrificed their lives in an attempt to gladden their sight with one glimpse of the holy buildings, where the performance of the due and proper rites is propitiatory in the eyes of the Supreme Being. These traces of human destruction, after first presenting themselves to my view, thickened as I went on; and now the crowd of pilgrims began to assemble around me: flocking from all quarters in groups, and by single individuals. I soon found myself buried in one multitudinous concourse of persons, attracted by the veneration every true Hindoo attaches to the sacred precincts of these temples. Many, amongst this vast number, were at their onset oppressed with age and disease. The old, unaided with vigour of constitution, or muscular strength, to

contend against their hardships, were amongst the first that fell by the way-side, to close their eyes for ever. Those diseased, a prey to emaciation and weakness, soon followed, yet not one, whilst the slightest power remained to him, relaxed in his endeavours to gain a foremost place amongst the pilgrims on the approach. Many again, who had left their homes in the vigour of manhood, but uninured to fatigue from sedentary habits, contracted fever and disease whilst marching, and now, completely exhausted, fell in my presence, amongst the sand hills, to furnish a meal for wild beasts, and leave their bones to whiten the sterile soil. Others again, were seen harassing themselves in measuring the distance with their whole length prostrate on the ground, in which manner they had come many coss, exposed to the burning heat or midnight dews, in performance of a vow or voluntary penance, exacted from them, to avoid an impending misfortune, or to ensure recovery from sickness; others again, bearing pans of fire in the open palm of the right hand, the arm extended to the utmost perpendicular above the head, pushed their way through the crowd, and strode manfully

on, alike disregarded by and disregarding others. Many, crippled with the distance already travelled over, made but slow progress, now seating themselves to ease their wearied limbs, or cool their chafed and sore feet, and now again, aided by their relatives, or depending upon their staff, they endeavoured to effect the little distance which remained to cheat them of their hopes, and snatch away their dearly purchased attempts. Amidst the concomitant confusion, the hum of voices, the groans of the dying, the shrieks of those trampled upon, my eye rested upon one scene in particular, which rivetted my attention, and made me halt temporarily before the spot. I was as yet but a novice in my profession, and unhardened, so that I could not pass by the unfortunate without even gazing at them, from apathetic indifference; and I hope, whilst life yet remains to me, to cherish the same sentiments towards mankind in general, and may I never forget to grant my assistance if it can avail any thing, towards the welfare or the good cause of another. Groupe after groupe had passed by the place before me and yet continued to move, by almost sweeping me before them, and yet not one tarried at the instance of either curiosity or charity.

“ A family, consisting of a mother and her infant, accompanied by her husband, had left their home where peace and plenty reigned, in the Mysore country, to come and pay their devotions at the ever sacred Jugga Natha. Fatigue and accumulated misfortune at length compelled them to rest by the way-side, and during the short interval of rest they had sought, the man had already passed away; the little offspring, scarcely nine months old, diseased with the small-pox, and emaciated in the extreme, seemed almost lifeless for moments together, except when irritated by the pangs it suffered; it then cried and screamed aloud. The mother beating her breasts unmercifully, with her clenched fists, and weeping at the death of her husband, with dishevelled hair floating in the breeze, and torn garments, worn out with fatigue and woe, was the very image of despair; whilst her maternal fondness for her child, as it lay writhing in agony and uneasiness before her, yet further increased her misery. First gazing wildly on her husband's corpse, and then stealing a look at her helpless suffering infant, she raved and wept aloud. Dashing herself upon the earth with vehemence, tearing her

hair, as if a stranger to all corporeal feeling, in indulging her mental sorrow, she at last became exhausted, lost all power, and swooned away. When by exertions on my part, she had sufficiently recovered to collect her scattered senses, she brushed me on one side, raised herself from her recumbent posture, rushed to her infant, clasped it in her arms, bathed it with her tears, and dried them with her burning kisses, ere they had rested for a moment on the child's cheeks. Now she offered it the sustenance of its mother's milk; when to her horror and amazement she discovered the spark of life was extinguished. The torrent of anguish which now overwhelmed the deserted widow, who had lost both husband and child in one luckless hour, cannot be described. The demoniacal actions, the fruits of maddening sorrow, her bewildered look, her imprecations against, mingled with demands for aid from, her deities, drove me onwards towards my destination. Inclining with the fluctuations of the crowd, I hastened on, followed by the unfortunate woman, still carrying her lifeless infant, and rending the skies with her voice of woe and lamentation. 'Array, will no one help me? Oh my girl, my girl!' she

continued exclaiming, whilst she gazed upon her dead child, and pressed it yet closer to her bosom; ‘ will no one help me?’ Deaf alike to all around them, and straining their heated eye-balls towards the situation of the temples, myriads passed onwards. Shout after shout from those portions of the multitude which were before us, rushed past with every breeze, until at length having ascended a low sand hill, from whence these had arisen, we in our turn saw the dusky temples rearing themselves in the distance, with the boundless ocean in their rear. One and all who had thus their hopes consummated, forgot in an instant their sorrows, griefs, and pains, and raised their voices in exultation. Judge my surprize then, when the widow joined in the uproarious shout. The same religious enthusiasm which gave rise to her journey, and had in its effects loaded her with accumulated misfortune, yet burned within her; and whilst her heart bled at the dear sacrifices she had made to obtain her wish, the fulfilment of her hopes, for the moment, amply repaid her.

“ Thus far is all I need relate,” continued the old man, “ as the after portion of her life I had

frequent opportunities of witnessing, and many circumstances connected with her involve my own secrets. This was but one scene out of many; doubtless, could my eye have scanned the whole of the adjacent country, and penetrated into the thickest of the multitude, I should have witnessed many scenes equally terrific, in the severity of the trials undergone, and praiseworthy in the unbinding firmness of the opposition offered. Now judge for yourself, how far less shocking the case you recited to me becomes, on comparison with the one just brought before your consideration. If you could collect, from the individuals of my wandering tribe, an account of what each has seen in his pilgrimages, and suffered, you would have condensed a chaos of narrated evil, indicative of our's being any thing but an easy, indolent life, replete with pleasure, as it is generally understood to be. But, Huk ! Huk ! here is the mid-day sun above the horizon, permit me to pass on." So saying, he leapt from the ground, seized his wallet, put on his shoes which he had removed, on seating himself, from his feet, and I soon lost sight of him, after ascending the opposite bank of the tank.

CHAPTER III.

REFLECTIONS—EXPLANATION—THE SUTTEE*—SCENERY—THE PEACOCK—EXPECTATION AND SURPRISE—OUR SITUATION, AND MAHOMED'S ADVICE.—VEXATIONS AND REMARKS—DESPATCH AND BREAKING UP OF MY ENCAMPMENT.

OUT of sight and out of mind is doubtless the opinion of the reader, but such was not the case in reality. I could not help pondering upon his woful tale and its import, and perhaps, had I not witnessed in himself a further elucidation of what his language went to confirm, I might have disregarded his assertions. Many there are, doubtless, who are disinclined to credit the sum total of a traveller's marvels; but my acquaintance with the manners, customs and conduct of the natives, but more particularly of the Hindoo,

* *The Suttee*.—The widow who burns herself.

whose penances outvie in severity almost the endurance of human nature—had taught me to regard his statement in a far different light, and when adopted at the instance of religious feelings—whether of a right and proper character or not, they cannot but be respected; more especially when the blessed light of the Holy Gospel has not yet been discovered to them. There is an enthusiasm, a fear of shame, a steady reliance on the promises contained in their religious writings, which makes them bid defiance to adversity, and laugh misfortune in the end to scorn. Their sole aim is to follow in the track of their forefathers, endeared to them by the consecrated continuance of ages, and kept before their sight in the example of their fellow-creatures. Their customs, the divisions of caste, and dreaded punishment of excommunication for disobeying their mandates, gain an ascendancy over their feelings, that would, in most instances, render their subversion a severe curse to those in whose life-times a change of their laws should be enforced. And have we not examples of the same feelings in our own hemisphere and within our knowledge, even where education has attained its very summit of

perfection, and a benign and blessed religion, neither enjoining severities for endurance, nor hardships innumerable, tends to harmonize the mind and inspire it with vigour. Humanity would prompt us above all things, to see the abolition of the self-immolation of the widow at her husband's funeral pile; but yet, in how many instances, as their society is formed in the present hour, up to which these ceremonies, although not upheld, have nevertheless been tolerated, would such a deed, in lieu of proving a kindness to the present generation, engender a curse, only to be remedied by suicide. For on what, except the murderous knife, can the untutored, accused by their own customs, for which they have been taught from early youth to cherish the highest veneration, and for which they are now ready to yield up life itself—on what else, I would ask, will they look for aid, or for comfort? Cases are often adduced of force being used to constrain the widow to act as her own murderer, and these are urged upon the notice of those who have never witnessed the people whose cause, it is hoped, they may be induced to espouse: yet I must assert, that, from what I have seen of the Suttee,

I cannot myself bring forward such an act, in the first instance ; but yet, if life is not momentarily extinguished, on the burst of the flames, doubtless fright might, in the event of escape from the pile, alter the widow's determination—and doubtless has done so. I have conversed with one in 1829, and every answer to my questions was a sensible one, neither did she labour under the effects of a narcotic, nor was she intoxicated ; but her mind was firm and unbending in her resolve, although offers of support and even affluence were proffered by the Rajah in whose dominions the pile received its victim. Again, how often and how strenuously have the servants of the Honourable East India Company endeavoured to dissuade the widow, from plunging, by her own act, thus fearlessly into eternity—and what have been the results ? She has of course preferred to abide by her choice. Because the widow has been unable to cheat her own mind, deceive herself, or satisfy her conscience upon the propriety of accepting the proffered offer ; and if such is really the case, can you, by any other means, than by gradually undermining the foundation of her belief by education, force her to keep an existence

she spurns the idea of retaining? Is it to be expected that her unenlightened mind would not rather urge her to self-sacrifice, than to fall from the pinnacle of sacerdotal respectability, when, to become an outcast and a bye-word is the reward of opposite conduct? Even where education has made the most favourable impressions, how difficult is it to stem the tide of adversity, by living to cherish a knowledge of what has been and what is? In adding one to the many monuments of Suttees, the widow dies surrounded with plaudits; she knows her memory is to be preserved lasting; the finger of rapture, amongst her countrymen, will be pointed to the spot marked as the place of her self-martyrdom :—whereas, to refuse this ceremony, is to be branded with infamy, to remain without a protector throughout life, to be clad in certain robes, shorn of her hair, and banished from her home for ever. Who, I may ask, can, unless by education, tame the workings of ambition?

With the thundering vengeance of the European world around him, and ready to be discharged upon his devoted head, could we restrain one act of Napoleon, or dictate to him what

his mighty mind scorned to approve of in the hour of his ruling God,—Ambition? And can an order for the discontinuance of the Suttee, then, be expected to ensure the object in view, of preventing the unnecessary shedding of human blood, unless other more congenial measures should be devised, to aid its cause?—But I would not willingly be misunderstood on this head; it is the method, not the intention, these remarks tend to disapprove of, and in being offered, may perhaps not be altogether unheeded by those who cannot make personal observations, when I assure them, I would willingly, had I the ability to do good immediately in this cause, by other means than I have hinted at, offer such for their consideration as readily as I have these.

Such were my reflections as I gazed upon the following scene, towards sunset, to the description of which I would direct the observation of those, with whom the abolition of this horrid ceremony, remains as a matter of argument; and who again have to decide upon the most efficacious method to carry the wishes of their countrymen into effect, and to paralyze the endeavours of those who aim at self-destruction.

It had come to my knowledge, during my halt, that a Suttee was to take place in the evening, and accordingly, amongst my other observations on the adjacent land and its varied objects, I had not failed to remark the busy preparations for this awful ceremony. Beggarries, laden with fuel of all descriptions, now cast down their loads, received their payment in pice*, washed themselves in the tank, and hastened to the village, to purchase food for their meal, or again add to their hard-earned wealth, in profiting by a second hire, if attainable. Brahmins now came and gave directions, and then as suddenly decamped: banyans, with dhubbers of gheet† and oil, and pounded resin; others with dried hemp; many bearing cotton,—had by turns supplied those with the necessary articles, to whom were intrusted the immediate erection of the pile. Two or three couple of oxen dragged onwards a heavy log of dried timber, for the upper part or

* *Pice*—small copper coins.

† *Dhubbers of Ghee*.—The dhubber is made of untanned hide, and of various sizes. Ghee is clarified butter.

roofing of the hut, to which the pile, when built, assimilated, whilst many asses, laden with dried cow-dung,* continued labouring between the village and the scene of busy preparation. My dinner intervened, to interrupt my further observation, and when I again returned, all was complete. At a short distance a faint column of smoke indicated the quarter from whence the destructive element was to be propagated in furtherance of this idolatrous custom, equally revolting in absurdity and cruelty. The single individuals, whom curiosity led forth from the village, or whom a religious feeling and veneration for this awful ceremony, had induced to quit their usual occupation and repair to this spot of blood and suffering,—soon gathered into groups, as each recognizing his neighbour, or a valued friend, became busied in pointing out whence, or describing when, the Suttee was expected to come forth, and present herself to the idle gazers. The herdsman gathered his flocks together earlier than usual, to take their evening draught, that he might be present; the banyan for once quitted

* Called *Gobur*.

the verandah in which his wares were exposed, to lose an hour and many a rupee. Devotees were hastening on with joy, whilst the Brahmin, with his expostulation, urged every despatch in completing the arrangements. My horse remained ready saddled at the door of the enclosure, my servants were clad in their gayest attire, and only waited my departure to quit the place and follow; whilst all but the sentry on duty had my permission to absent themselves. "They come! they come!" a thousand voices exclaimed: "they come! the Suttee! behold the Suttee!"—and soon the first burst of wild music floated past me, hurried onwards with the breeze. Short was the interval between my first excitement, as the purpose of those hastening onwards, burst upon my recollection in all the horrible certainty of death, which I knew attended the widow; and the appearance of the expected persons, as the procession, headed by the Brahmins and village chief, gently wound over the bank of the tank: there was a silent manner mingled in the crowded mass, such as reigns in the churchyard by moonlight: it was like the tramp of a body of military, moving on to the slaughter of their foes; silence

mixed with awe, and yet no appearance of fear or grief, so marked as to be singular. No sooner did the widow perceive the pile, than she rushed forward, bursting from her female friends, and prostrated herself before the pile, now swelling her smiles into a demoniac laugh, and now wailing in the loudest terms, over the loss of him, to follow whom into eternity, she was well prepared. The train of females, in their various coloured robes, the garments so arranged over the head, as to conceal the features of the face, when joined by the hand under the chin, came slowly on, pensively sad; and many among the fair Brahminees might have, perhaps, sighed over, or trembled at, the near approach of that awful crisis, which might, ere long, be the test of her own adherence to her religion, or the finish of her sufferings. And now, one and all surrounded the pile. After having gone through the necessary ablutions, the priests, clad in white, approached the fair Brahminee, and acquainted her all was prepared. Shouts again burst forth, and yet these exultations were the prelude to a scene of self-destruction. I shuddered at the thought, and would have shut my ears against itself and

many echoes, as I would by speed and journeying outstep the lengthening sounds of the funereal peal, which announces the burial time of my long-loved, much-valued friend, to be at hand:—and yet—I know not why—I mounted, and was in a moment at the spot, to gaze upon the scene more narrowly. I kept a keen and searching eye upon the widow, and could discern the utmost impatience for the fatal moment. Her actions of despair, when she looked upon her husband's corpse, and wildly urged his fond name upon our hearing, whilst vehemently dashing herself upon the ground, made my blood chill within me, and I longed to save her life, even if purchased with the sacrifice of all around her. In this state did I behold her, in the vigour of health, and blooming with beauty, dauntlessly prepare to separate from her children, relations, and kindred, and advance without a falter towards the dense mass of heaped combustibles, destined not only to consume the lifeless body of her husband, but to receive herself—a voluntary victim. I could have echoed to the boisterous roar around,—“O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?” The time drew on, and as yet the

voice of kind commiseration is of no avail; the tearless eye, the absence of all fear and trembling, is yet continued; and when I saw the joyous manner in which this infatuated female beheld the busy preparations for her martyrdom, in the lighting of torches, soon to feed the insatiable pile before her, I could not but admire her fortitude of mind, and determination of intention. I can affirm, it was sufficient to awe into veneration for her character, the feelings of any one who beheld it: and where, when, and how, can such enthusiastic souls be subdued? If the results of such unparalleled courage were to be the accumulation of the wealth—the happiness, of her family,—the enjoyment of luxury, or of every earthly comfort, with a lengthened life,—I could have guessed the widow's intention; but with the ghastly pile before her, and death, pointing out the way, and she willing to follow it, it baffled all my speculations to deduce any other conclusion, than that of religious inspiration, as her monitor. All entreaty to desist, on the part of the village officers, both in the judicial and revenue departments, having failed; not to mention my own exertions in the cause of humanity, an aged and

afflicted mother's tears, and the bitter sorrow of a sister, being alike disregarded, by this unbending female, we prepared to witness the worst and only alternative—the ceremony of self-immolation. Thrice round the pile the victim walked; distributed after each circumambulation some portion of her jewels, until all were disposed of, taking them from off her person in haste, with her own hands, as if scorning the delay : and then her children were presented to her. The mother's feelings here put her to a severe trial ; she lingered for a moment, as, bending over them, she imprinted her last kiss upon those lips she had often kissed before, when in the pride of life. Again she turned—the tear glistened in her eye—a shudder seemed to shake her ; but, in a moment, recovering her serenity, she seized an ignited torch, rushed into the interior of the pile, gazed upon her husband's corpse, placed his head in her lap, signalled a farewell to her friends, and set fire to the nearest spot ; whilst in every direction from without, the fire was assisted, and soon the crash was heard—the pile lost all form, and became one mass of burning brightness. The ceaseless beating of drums, winding of horns,

shouting of the multitude, aided with the echo, and discharges of fire-arms, drowned any cries that might otherwise have reached our ears, from the widow, in her dying moments.

The space around was once more cleared; the inhabitants retired to their homes, whilst I pressed onwards, to make my observations on the cultivated scene before me, and complete a circuit of a mile or two. The heat throughout the day had been intense, aided with the most powerful hot wind I ever experienced. The village was to all appearance at times covered with a misty vapour, half exhalation, and partly formed by clouds of sand, that with a passing *shytan** were hurried upwards together, with the grass torn by its violence from the roofs of the houses it swept over. The sun had scarcely sunken into repose, ere all was hushed around. Before my return even, all active bustle was relinquished. The trials of the day had made a deep impression upon human nature, and the nurture of rest was eagerly sought. The howling of jackals, answered by

* *Shytan*.—Literally Devil, applied to those passing gusts.

the barking of the innumerable village curs, was sufficiently annoying; but not another sound, no, not the rushing of a leaf, fanned by a breeze, intruded upon the calm stillness.

The hours between midnight and morn, so propitious for marching, were not disregarded, and when the day-light came to cheer me on my way, and open the beauties of the landscape to view, it was a far distant one to that which I had beheld at the close of the preceding day. Accustomed as I had been from my earliest arrival in India, to gaze upon the rocky surface of the Deccan, broken and divided by numerous and deep ravines, this march was not without its interest. The country through which my road lay, might almost be compared in fertile abundance to the luxuriant soil of Bengal, teeming with produce. The scenery around was of the most picturesque nature:—advancing at times through narrow lanes, bounded upon either side with hedgerows of milkbush and briars, that shot far above both man and horse, my view was circumscribed for the time, but then again, as these terminated, I saw vast plains stretched before my eye, thickly studded with mangoe, tamarind, and

peelow trees, varied with the neem, and goondie, which seemed to vie with each other in stupendous height, mighty bulk, and thick-set foliage. Divided and subdivided as the soil was into fields and paddocks, the hand of industry was every where visible, whilst the once uplifted earth, before the time of sowing, had now settled in furrows, thickly bristled with stubble, and bespoke the highly cultivated state of this province, and abundance of its produce. The position of the villages around, were generally upon some gentle undulation, which sufficiently raised them to become a marked object, had not the dense shade preserved around and about it, from the groves of trees, attracted observation.

Every now and then the approaching tramp of my horse aroused the stately peacock from his quiet and generally unmolested haunts, in the thick underwood adjoining the hedges, or in the concealment of a field of cotton trees. Where Hindoos are so prevalent as in Guzerat, these birds not only daily increase in numbers, but from the kindness experienced at the hands of these men, become completely domesticated in their habits, and yet there is something in the

approach of an European, whether in the difference of clothing, manner, or gait, I cannot say which, terrifies them, for at the sight of one they invariably move off with all the celerity of foot that characterizes them. The Government have deemed it advisable to lay an interdict upon Europeans ever killing a peacock in their districts, and common sense ought to dictate acquiescence. In several instances the feelings of the natives kindling at such outrages, have urged them to reap signal revenge upon the offending parties, and human blood has, in consequence, been shed on both sides, in an angry quarrel. Under my own knowledge, an European soldier, who, with some comrades, was out shooting, happening to kill a peacock, one of the sacred birds of the Hindoo mythology, within sight of a native, the whole village near which the occurrence took place was soon alarmed, a skirmish ensued, which was terminated by the death of the offender. Such is the result of wilfully or erroneously opposing yourself to the fury of their fanatical opinions; as useless as indecorous, when such feelings are incorporated with their religion. May it serve as a lesson to those who may enter

the military or civil service of the Honourable Company, at a future date. If sport be the object of him who will yet pursue this revered bird, I can assure him he can reap but little, more especially if thick underwood be the resort of the broods he is in quest of, as he may be certain the bird will never raise itself upon its wing, whilst it can by swiftness, and unimpeded by the growth of trees, evade its pursuer, or uselessly fatigue him.

As I leisurely passed through the village, at which this day's march was to terminate, before I could reach my baggage, which had halted at the further extremity, I was considerably amused with the high state of expectation with which the inhabitants awaited my arrival. The whole bazaar was stocked with idle gazers; the little children, who, for aught I know, had been the most anxious for my coming, no sooner heard the cry of "Saheb! Saheb!" than directing their attention to the quarter these words were exclaimed in, they caught a glimpse of me, as I wound round the base of the village pagoda, and bore down upon them; "Saheb! Saheb!" they repeated; then fled in every direction, roaring, screaming, overturning

the weakest in their flight, or themselves being upset, by a recoil from a stronger party, against whom this misguided haste had brought them. All was hurry and scamper, until, when at a safe distance, they ventured to turn back a glance or two upon the much-dreaded stranger. The women returning from the wells ensconced themselves behind such projecting pieces of brick wall, as offered a retreat for the concealment of their persons; if not within their reach, or in turning a corner, they came suddenly upon the foe, their saree was quickly closed over their face, and they, with less politeness, than intention of insult, turned their backs upon me, to preserve a modest decorum, in hiding the features of their face. The Banian, seated amidst his heaps of grain, spices, tobacco and other commodities, in his thirsting after gain, scarcely deigned to grant his attention for a moment, to the busy scene of confusion, or to scan my person. The Shroff, surrounded with copper coin, and his money box placed before him, just granted me a glance, as my shadow thrown upon him, in passing, drew his attention from his neatly written account book, covered with a por-

tion of red stained leather. The herdsman, as his flock met me, plunged into the midst, and with shouts and blows divided his cattle to either side, to form a lane for my passage. The village curs even were affrighted, they scampered off, climbed the ruined walls adjacent, and then turned to bark me welcome, or to bid me defiance, staring fiercely at me, but again taking to their heels if I dashed on horseback towards them. The unfortunate asses, who, in this quarter of the world, as well as in every other, are hard worked and ill fed, having no regular supply of food allowed them, alone remained undisturbed by any arrival, as if their difficult employment, in searching from amongst the rubbish for something to eat, made fear a stranger to them, and kept their eyes bent upon the ground. The loud baying of the village dogs became fainter and fainter as I proceeded, headed by my horsekeeper, in the direction of my tents. At length I gained a view of my *Beehoba** pitched

* *Beehoba*.—Literally without a pole. A small tent used for sleeping in. It is supported at the four corners with poles, over which the ropes pass.

near a well, under the grateful shade of banyan and tamarind trees, where, after a hundred yards' canter I alighted, and found every thing prepared for my reception. The wild, yet soothingly plaintive notes of the chaunt of the husbandman at the well, urging his jaded bullocks to raise the heavily laden waterskin, almost bursting, although not new to me, was still pleasing. As I sat at breakfast, the prospect before me was delightful. My eye rested all the while upon the bright green surface of an enclosed field of grain, nurtured by irrigation. Beyond this, opposing a barrier of gloomy darkness and limiting my view, a pan garden* offered a pleasing shade to contemplate, and at this advanced period of the hottest season of the year, these sort of insignificant luxuries, for into such they can only be augmented by the fancy, as they do not absolutely contribute much to personal comfort, are gratefully received, and most generally sought after by the Indian traveller, if an experienced

* *Pan garden*.—The pan is cultivated as a luxury. It is a leaf in which the natives wrap up spices and eat it, and is much sought after.

one. The constant sounds of the water dropping from the upraising bucket into the well, and the melodious echo amidst the encircling grove, combined with the pleasing rush of water into the cistern which communicated with the further extremities of this garden scene, by means of small canals, were agreeable sounds; indeed I was induced to fancy it rendered my situation less irksome than the heat would otherwise have reduced it to. Besides, the proximity of water led me to erect my tatties,* which with ease were kept moist throughout the day-time, and formed, combined with the shelter afforded by the pan garden, a sufficient barrier against the superlatively annoying hot wind, which, with every march into the interior, became more parching and of greater violence.

Two more marches were in like manner completed. On each succeeding day after our disembarkation, the heat had become more enervat-

* *Tatties*.—These are screens made of the roots of a particular kind of grass. They retain moisture, and shed around, when wetted, an aromatic scent. The air in passing through them becomes cooled.

ing. The night-time, however, was by far the most uncomfortable period of my existence. Wherever the eye, hand, or foot rested, a burning heat prevailed. The hot wind, which continued until sunset, and through my tatties lent a cooling breeze to my tent, was now hushed, the exhalations from the heated ground, added to the density of the atmosphere, and outmatched in annoyance to me, the brighter glare and more excessive heat of noonday; there was no alternative to mitigate the endurance of this uncomfortable situation. With disturbed rest, after daily fatigue, and scarcely able to draw a breath, I should soon have lost all patience, and been reduced to despair, had not the knowledge of the monsoon being at hand, been present to my mind, to cheer me on in the difficult task of enduring all without a murmur, and continuing my endeavours to support life by any means. Besides, the heat, from which I chiefly suffered, was a certain prognostic of the near approach of the periodical rains.

On the evening of this my fourth day's march, dark and heavy clouds preceded sunset, and the glorious orb of day, ere yet it consigned us to the

dusky hue of night time, tinged them with the brightest hues of gold and scarlet with his parting rays. The mellowed shades, diversity of form, and various colours which the clouds assumed as slowly they emerged from the west, stretching over the azure blue expanse of the heavens, partly in masses and partly in detached fragments, augmented the brilliancy of the fast closing day.

This was a warning not to be disregarded, or triflingly disposed of, as my object was, if possible, to reach Ahmedabad before the rains set in. The first bursts of the monsoon, or rather the storms which usher in the periodical supply of water to cherish nature in these tropical climates, are most violent and irresistible. They deluge for a time the country; and the natural drains are incompetent to relieve themselves sufficiently quick to prevent the frequent inundations that cities and villages, near the sea shore, and on the banks of rivers, suffer from. The river Mhye formed an intervening barrier between the once mighty city I was journeying to, and my present situation, sufficient to awaken the activity of any traveller, as its passage

under the favourable auspices of the summer droughts was comparatively easy, and my luggage could be conveyed across without the necessity of either unloading the cattle, or providing a boat. Whether slumbering in the centre of its sandy bed, or rushing onwards to pay its tribute to the sea in all the magnitude and majesty of its wintry wrath, it crossed my road, and must be passed: its rapid rise and fall were not unknown to me, whilst the omens of the evening at once convinced me that the former, ere long, might give place to the latter unfavourable tide, as my affairs were situated.

My old servant, to whom the nature of marches during the rainy season throughout Guzerat, or even any portion of the western peninsula of India, was as familiar as his acquaintance with his hookah,* which he never parted scarcely from his grasp, (for even on the road he might be seen inhaling the delights of smoking as he went,) doubtless dreaded again catching one of those generally fatal fevers engendered by exposure at this period of the year,

* *Hookah*.—Pipe.

and therefore wished to shorten its duration as much as possible by expedition. The last one he had, brought, in its train of misfortune, the loss of a tooth or two by mercurial salivation, and rendered it necessary for him ever since to dye the bearded ornament of his mussulmanic physiognomy, or age might tell its unwelcome tale. Dreading, doubtless, further ravages, and perhaps more fatal ones, if adverse fate bound him again to the bed of sickness, he came up and requested permission to push on during the night, until within ten or twelve coss of the south-eastern bank of the river Mhye, where he assured me a large village and good bazaar would enable him to furnish a better meal than had graced my table of late.

To crown, if possible, his efforts to convince me of the utility of the proposed measure, and as I had interrupted him once or twice to ask the meaning of his language, he adopted at length English, and proceeded: "If master will reflect upon what his faithful servant, Mahomed, may say, and he is very old man, then master's good sense shew, that rain he all close coming, and river Mhye he broad and very bad, dangerous

river, if not cross now not come cross perhaps for many days, and damp and cold Durrumsollah on the banks; if master stay there will give bad fever. This very bad country, Saheb not know, much fever in this country. Master only give order, then Mahomed go on all night and during to-morrow day, then will get over river, and nothing remain to signify." Although this burst of eloquence, my reader will perceive, was conveyed in a speech rough and uncouth, and little more explanatory than the adoption of Hindostanee in the speaker's first advances at explanation, it however received the polish a rough diamond requires to determine its value, from the sound and useful argument it contained. It was true no river sufficiently large to retard my progress would remain after the passage of the Mhye was effected. I therefore consented to the proposal, finished my cup of tea as expeditiously as possible, replenished my pocket pistol with brandy, put a bundle of Manilla cigars into my hat, and bade him do as he pleased. My bechoba was struck; fires, fed with the dried grass refused by my horses, lighted in several places to facilitate the actions

of my different servants, and soon all was active bustle. The bullocks were reluctantly urged to quit their food and brought up to the pile of baggage; the sepoy's composing my guard put on their accoutrements as hastily as possible. The *naique** who commanded them looked to their flints and examined their arms, whilst each, with the mutual assistance of their comrades, adjusted their knapsacks to the bent of the galling on their backs; packed up their kit and bedding, which I had conveyed at my own expence with the rest of my things, to lighten the load they had to march with; and soon all remained leaning on their muskets, attentive to their leader, and only waiting for the word of command "to march." Mahomed now paid for his purchases, giving about half what was demanded, which in the end was an ample compensation; now locked up the camp case, then ordered the mussal to see all my boxes safely packed upon the animals; now came to me for orders; now recommended this measure,

* *Naique*.—As used here, a rank in the native army, corresponding with corporal in the British army.

and then rushed at one of the coolies with his clenched fists for having put the top of the camp case downwards in placing it upon his head. Again the delay of the horsekeepers in packing up their head and heel ropes,* to be included with cooking pots in one of the burthens, called forth the old man's ire; whilst something forgotten brought him once or twice, or made him despatch messengers to the camp again, after he had started. At length myself and horsekeeper alone remained behind of all those who, but an hour before, had crowded the small encampment my halt had formed. My time for starting was some hours delayed, in order to allow my baggage sufficiently to advance, and render my arrival after a fatiguing ride at my next journey's end worth my consideration, in offering me a meal and shelter, which, at present, I could better do without. How little had I anticipated being forced on against my will, earlier this night than usual;

* *Head and heel ropes.*—It must be understood, that in India all horses have their hind feet fastened when at their pickets.

still, however, I, as I would advise any other traveller similarly situated, accommodated myself to the exigencies of the moment, and could have laid down upon the ground to rest, if not with a contented mind, yet with one little ruffled. If with momentary flashes of splenetic disgust, a murmur rose upon the lips, the knowledge of how much worse a fate might have attended me, allayed my passion again, and gave me every encouragement to persevere in cultivating my desire for sleep, by composing myself. If nothing else either useful or ornamental is derived from associating with camps and martial life, a certain sort of passive indifference, often wanting elsewhere, from constant exposure and knocking about, forms a characteristic habit of a military man, which but few other schools are able to impart. Imperative as martial law is, and compulsory as every order must be when on service, to ensure subordination and couple success with endeavour, an officer eventually contracts a habit of never counting upon a moment as his own, and leaves his actions of necessity to be swayed by others, his seniors, upon whom the exigencies of the service have alike a right to call, for the aban-

donment of every comfort, and the support of every privation, whilst he follows the drum, and has a pride in the performance of his duty. Being myself a member of a military community, and not exactly at the time I speak of, a griffin, I had long since acquired the necessary lesson; my mind was accustomed to adversity, so that I was able in this instance to bear with patience, what a follower of pleasure would, doubtless, have grumbled at, to give up my intended next day's halt, a long proposed day's shooting, which the country hereabouts furnished ample sport to enhance, and solely because the wind and weather interfered with my pursuits, and the miseries of an inland journey in the rains, upreared themselves to my imagination, to force compliance upon my part. It is hard, I must confess, not only to have fortune frown, but e'en to be the sport of real or imaginary storms and tempests when on dry land. Before I conclude this with explaining, such is travellers' lot, I would enforce upon the notice of the young and inexperienced, my remarks of a military life, as a red coat in its glittering appearance, often makes the soldier an envied man, when a participation of his hardships,

wounds, and disease, would soon dispel these airy visions of glory and repose. The hastily purchased commission by the embryo hero, often leaves him disgusted with its possession, after six months in quarters, or even, perhaps, two under canvass.

CHAPTER IV.

MAHOMED'S CHARACTER AND DOGGEDNESS—A START
—COMING ON OF SOUTH-WEST MONSOON—A HALT.
—THE TRAVELLER LOSES HIS WAY—PERFIDY OF
GUIDES—DURRUMSOLLAH—STRANGER—A HINT UP-
ON QUESTIONS—NATIVE ARMY.

MAHOMED, my head servant, was one of those peculiar old fellows, who often assume more of the master than the dependant, and can it much be wondered at, when fifty is to be controlled by seventeen, as is too often the case abroad. He had been in my service ever since my earliest onset in a military career, for I hired him from the Bunder, not from a consideration of the many characters he produced, but from a certain something in his appearance I liked ; for in India, little dependance can be placed upon their certificates of conduct, as the native clerks are good

imitators of hand writing, or at least, of such, as being ignorant of the person or handwriting of the signer, a novice can form no opinion of. He considered himself a privileged being to do and act upon certain occasions as he deemed fitting, and best calculated for what he chose to construe into as my motives, rather than strictly obeying my orders, and this had often led to angry dialogues and severe disputings, for answer he would at all risks, and as my passion grew hot and furious, his age would step in to protect him. Besides, he had been my first preceptor in pointing out the various manners and customs of the inhabitants of the strange country I had come to sojourn in. His broken English had often served me during my griffinage; and my ignorance of any other language doubtless enabled him to cheat me handsomely in my purchases, for that every Indian servant will do, although, if money be entrusted to his care, none but the most depraved amongst them will ever think of misemploying it, because detection must be immediate. Now that I had become more habituated to my situation, and afforded him a scanty harvest of profits, he disputed with me the sovereignty

alone. On all occasions, he appeared little inclined to leave me entirely to my own guidance, whatever might be the subject I undertook. Habit had familiarized to his mind the necessity of maintaining a control over my actions, which, however little in accordance with my wishes or my wants, I found extremely difficult to check. And now for a fresh elucidation of his obstinate endeavours to maintain a line of conduct I bade him as uselessly desist from, as he pertinaciously persisted in. He had gained me over to his proposal of starting my baggage, and he now extended this license much to my annoyance, by not halting it again until he had advanced five miles beyond the place appointed. It was in vain upon my arrival there, I enquired for the position of my tents, which I fully anticipated were already pitched; No one knew any thing about them. Some, indeed, had seen them journeying on to the next village, but this I at once determined as false, and only offered as an answer to prevent further interrogatories. Yet I continued to elicit information tending to confirm the fact of all having passed on; and one thing was certain, that I could find no vestige of them

about the village I was wandering around; so that, having ascertained the probable distance of the newly chosen halt, I bent my horse's head towards that direction. A voice from behind made me rein up for a moment. A man, breathless from haste, running towards me, and making his obeisances whilst at a distance, neared me at last, said I had chosen the exactly opposite road to the one my servants had taken, and added, that the chief with the red pugrie on, or, as he was termed, the butleer,* had left him with instructions to guide me towards him. The fellow was young and active, seemed anxious to please, and by his swiftness on foot enabled me to trot on without losing sight of him; so that I soon came up with Mahomed's intentions, into which he had rather compelled than coaxed me. I certainly had made up my mind to give him a good rowing for his misconduct; but a capital breakfast soothed down my angry mood, and to enjoy it warm demanded my instant attention to it. Mahomed escaped, and I was of opinion it was the best meal I had ever made, for my

* *Butleer*.—A corruption of butler.

appetite was appeased, and my spirits renovated. The baggage cattle, during this time, were discussing a full allowance of grain, and were also favoured with some drugs to cheer up their drooping spirits at my expence; and again the cavalcade moved forward.

Having lighted my cigar, the very best of companions, neither requiring answers to questions, or interfering with the train of thoughts the future calls for, or the past has given rise to, I sat contemplating the appearance of the weather, anticipating a trying journey; and, in fine, chewing "the cud of sweet and bitter fancy." The whole horizon was enshrouded in dark and gloomy masses of heavy clouds, towering one above the other until they reached the very centre of the heavenly arch. The last portion of light azure blue was at length hidden from sight; distant thunder rumbled on the ear, whilst now and then vivid flashes of forked and sheet lightning lit up portions of the heavy threatening mass they burst from, and dazzled my eye. The wind was hushed, the foliage of the trees no longer rustled, a gloom was spread around, whilst the warbling choristers, who be-

fore had greeted my hearing with their various notes mingling in one soft melody, seemed in a moment gone, or silenced by fear, or frightened to a distance. There was apparently a pause, such as is known to the soldier as a moment of anxiety before the battle. The elements were collecting all their violence, whilst nature appeared resting tranquil, and harbouring her strength to withstand the struggle. My horse, by this time, had finished his second meal of grain, generally given at mid-day. My horse-keeper had his orders, and accordingly he brought him at once before me. It was my favourite; I knew I could depend upon him; and I felt certain, ere long, his courage would be severely put to the test. As soon as I was mounted, Lallah seized up my chair, put it upon the crown of his head, covering his back with that of his burthen, joined my horsekeeper, and followed in my track, close at the heels of my horse. We now crossed an irrigated field, plunged into the high road, breaking through the hedge of the enclosure at the most convenient spot to ourselves, and soon lost all traces of our late halting place. The more heavy

clouds continued to float above our heads, threatening every moment to deluge us as we proceeded, whilst the hot wind now no longer annoyed us. The storm still gathering strength as we went on, seemed to frown maliciously at our attempts and hopes of gaining the opposite bank of the Mhye, ere the river became flooded. Presently, a grateful freshness was borne towards us, upon the wings apparently of zephyrs; an earthy scented gale succeeded to it, which bore evident proof of some portion of the dreaded rain having fallen at a distance. This further tended to diminish my certainty of success; and when a breeze, strengthening every moment, summoned the whole of the landscape woods into motion, until the weaker trees bent to the earth, and the stronger and larger ones seemed unable to withstand its fury; or again rushing on with the distant roar and hollow murmur of a cascade, heightened with the whistling twang of the foliage, I gave up all as lost. Of a sudden it gained the strength of a hurricane, and hurrying thick clouds of dust before it, enveloped the whole scenery around in darkness. "Lay hold of the guide," I roared, as my animal

turned round to evade the thick dusty cloud blown against his face ; “ lay hold of the guide, and make for the nearest village ; do not quit sight of him.” He was accordingly made prisoner, just in time sufficient to prevent him from absconding ; a rope was fixed round his arm, and I held the other end of it. The once distant thunder now gained upon us ; peal upon peal brought the threatened danger yet nearer, as they successively shook the heavens, until they burst in majesty above our heads, as if to awe us into a knowledge of our mighty Creator’s power, and our own insignificance. Vivid flashes of lightning shot their fiery forks, tipped with the burning brightness of purple flame, in every direction throughout the firmament. The rain, after a time, commenced with large heavy drops, now falling, and now again hushed for a moment. The hope of reaching any shelter, in time to avail ourselves of what it alone could be useful for, that of preventing us getting fairly wet through, fled, as the increasing rain, now thickened into sheets of water, deluged the whole country, not forgetting those who traversed it. We, accordingly, in lieu of quitting

our direct road, resumed it; and I alighted about sunset at a village, where I had given instructions to my servant to see a relief horse posted for me. Here I learned that my baggage was a full hour and a half in advance of me; so that, having already come half way, I might yet have the good fortune to outmarch my enemy, or, at least, come up with my servants. As my horsekeeper proceeded to tighten the girths of my saddle upon my fresh animal, I held his rein, and began to inspect my holsters: I dare say my reader is, or justly might be, all conjecture, all anxiety, to know the reason why. Holsters generally, he argues, are intended for pistols; and to this I readily consent with my usual urbanity of manner, for I would be understood as no disputant. There must be danger upon the road the traveller is taking; now is he not a clever fellow to be upon the alert?—ere long we shall have the sequel. But where is it, he continues, as he turns over page after page, searching for the word thief, with all the eagerness of a Bow-street officer after an original. “Why, I can find no battle, no pinioned captives; neither are there the slain described, for the imagination to paint the

corpses of, in bold colouring : nothing ! I declare I am disgusted : why, there is nothing at all about it. I think the author might have left his pistols behind him," he roars forth in disgust. And so I did, is my reply, to accommodate matters ; and was only searching for a cold chicken, and my brandy bottle, which had usurped the place of the grim looking bell-mouthed bull-dogs, sometimes deposited in my holsters. Like all novices, a novice in campaigning has yet to learn, perhaps, that food for yourself is a far more useful companion than bullets for your foes. This may perhaps account for my disregarding my wet and comfortless situation, and taking an inspection of my accoutrements under a heavy and disagreeable rain. The cream of a joke or story ought never to be anticipated, reader ; so go on following me through my storm, sometimes wringing my coat tails for me, or, in sheer compassion, holding an umbrella over my head ; for if you do not, you may lose the description of what, however trifling, may yet have an interest for you, if no other than that of enabling you to kill time before luncheon.

Somewhat refreshed with my hastily snatched

repast, I again mounted, and wandering through the dirty and miserable village, the avenues to which were choked up with affrighted cattle and half drowned sheep, I again exposed myself upon a new charger to the violence of the weather, at this the first burst of the south-western monsoon. The day had closed in, and what could I anticipate but some mischance in tracking my way through such difficulties as an unknown country enveloped in the dark obscurity of night and storm. To remedy as much as possible these evils, I had provided myself with a double set of guides, upon whose fidelity I placed every reliance, having, in my own estimation, won the way to their hearts, as a vulgar saying has depicted it, "through the medium of their throats," by making them an ample allowance of the country spirituous liquor, for which I paid a mere nothing it is true, but which, with a Bheel, often effects more than the display of money. Besides I hoped to have awakened them into exertion, by appealing to their mercenary feelings, in promising ample reward in specie at the end of the journey. The active promptitude they displayed at my very onset, in mentioning

every ravine which intersected my road, now leading my horse by his rein across them, or heading me, that I might follow in safety, repeating the warning of "Cuma, Saheb, Cuma," beware ! soon quieted all my apprehensions upon this score. The cheering hope that every step led me nearer to provisions, the *sine qua non*, and shelter, the dulce, which I never doubted, ere long, to combine in happy unison, rendered me regardless of my unpleasant situation, and I continued smoking my cigar as we went on, with perfect indifference. I was already wet through, so what signified the rain, my horse was fresh, which rendered distance of little consequence, so that my spirits never flagged for an instant. The brandy-bottle was constantly appealed to ; seaman-like, I took a long pull and a strong pull ; so that, with it's balmy influence, I was prevented from feeling chilly, and had little fear of taking cold. Again, my cheroot was both companion-like and exhilarating. Up to this moment, such were positively my feelings, I knew it was of no avail to sigh at what could not be remedied ; and habit, by this time, had familiarized me with these oriental luxuries, a drenched coat upon my

back, a journey before me, and a dark rainy night to complete it in.

The storm was now apparently at its highest pitch, and yet my progress was unimpeded ; until my horse, scared by a vivid flash of lightning which seemed to descend into the earth immediately under his feet, and yet farther frightened with the awful crash of thunder, that in an instant followed, louder than the roar of a salvo from a newly unmasked battery, stood firmly planted like a rock, shook underneath his burthen, and positively refused to proceed any further. The whip and spur he alike disregarded, scorning to advance when urged by them, and only replying to my attempts to move him, through their agency, by kicking, snorting, plunging, and rearing. To add to my dismay, I found no trace whatever of my guides ; they had, doubtless, observing my indifference, for my eye seldom rested on them, divided at some favourable spot, escaped in the pitchy darkness, leaving me to my ruminations and wet apparel. It was impossible to conjecture how far I might have wandered on without their aid ; yet, nevertheless, a drowning man catches at straws ; I roared after

the deserters, now denouncing vengeance, or offering reward. As a stratagem, with each flash of lightning I called to my horsekeeper for my gun, declaring I saw them, in hopes, if hidden near, they might be induced to discover themselves; but no! it would not do, the distant echo alone fell back upon my hearing. The coolie, Lallah, bearing my chair, came to mind, and, with the idea, a faint glimmer of hope returned, only to be again immediately extinguished, for it was apparent from what he said, that he considered we had been seduced into a bye-path by the perfidious guides, the termination to which I could not foresee; nor had I any chance of ascertaining in which direction I ought to steer across the country to regain the main road. My former light-heartedness now gave way to the full measure of despair; uncertain of my way, I regretted every pace my horse advanced, whilst the indifferent, unsatisfactory, and indecisive answers, so characteristic of a native, and inherent in the nature of my horsekeeper, as he returned them to my questions, served only to increase my chagrin. What could I not have done to him, what blows could I not

with pleasure have seen counted in lines upon his back with a rattan, and what a horsewhipping did I not wish to inflict upon the scoundrel in my impassioned moments; but I was forced to relinquish all my sweet revenge, and reply mildly, lest he should, in these times of adversity, leave me, like the rest of my friends had done. No, no, civility costs nothing, and may give you a right to put some reliance upon the endeavours of those it has been bestowed upon.

Onwards we toiled, still suffering; but yet, although our progress was but slow, my fancy in its fertility whispered "slow is sure." And so it was essentially sure, as it was certainly leading us astray from our object. A Bheel now overtook our party, and was induced, by a present, to lead us towards the nearest village he was acquainted with, which he accordingly, be it said to his honour, by my gratitude, did. At a far advanced period of the night a few glimmering lights betokened the position of the place he was leading us up to. And ere long we obtained information of a Durrumsollah, situated a hundred yards from the house of our informant, whom we had aroused from his slumber to ask, and who, with more

civility than I expected, offered to show us the way to it. Although confident in my own mind that provisions could not be procured at this late hour, not even milk, I must confess my situation rendered shelter and rest most desirable. I accordingly alighted, and making my way over the threshold of a low entrance, found myself at last sheltered from the inclemency of the weather. A square, surrounded by a corresponding continuation of shed open to the inside, which forms the court yard, is the general characteristic of these buildings,—room and accommodation rather than elegance and expence being considered, and in such a one I took up my temporary residence, nor, as luck would have it, was I long left to my own thoughts.

At a distant angle of the building upon my right hand, a traveller, it was evident, had taken up his quarters. The reflection thrown around and upon the walls, from the almost expiring fire, kindled in the interior of this portion of the shed, rested upon a shield, matchlock, and spear. I bent my steps towards the inviting prospect, stumbling over a heap of horse furniture and sadlery in my way, and found a man squatted upon his hams,

sitting close by the fire, his carpet spread underneath him, regaling himself with his hookah. I accosted him, and questioned him regarding the name of this village ; as I was anxious to ascertain my exact position, how far I had diverged from the direct route, and discuss with my horsekeeper, for you must at times descend to ask advice even of the most ignorant, upon the best plan, for our farther progress.

The stranger rose, gave me the Moslem benediction, at the same time offering a salaam. The usual inquiries after myself and my intentions, coupled with language abounding in the plural number, as a token of his respect, soon followed. A first glance quite prepossessed me in his favour. The gentle and willing manner in which the information I sought was conveyed to me, strengthened my hastily-formed opinion, whilst the noble style of his language, a well digested mixture of Hindoostanee, in its purest form, occasionally ornamented with appropriate derivations from Persian, at once bespoke him acquainted with more than ordinary acquirements. During this time nothing could induce him to remain seated, although he, as well as my fatigue, compelled me

to throw myself at once upon the ground close to his carpet, which I strenuously refused to use for my accommodation, as I knew it was all the bedding such travellers carry about with them, and my dripping apparel would soon have rendered it as comfortless to me as useless to him.

As he stood opposite to me, having replenished the fire with fuel, I had full leisure to make observations upon his general appearance. He was above the ordinary stature of the native Indians in general, about five feet eight inches, well made, erect in his gait, and his whole contour impressed me with the idea of his being able to support fatigue. His chest was no less remarkable for breadth and depth than for elegance of form, whilst every limb hung loose about him, as if accustomed to athletic exercises, and remarkable for activity. His manly and easy gait, frankness of manner, open and good-natured countenance, scarred, and somewhat disfigured,—by the prowess of his foes, or the hands of assassins, I could not tell which,—broad shoulders and sinewy limbs, made me conjecture him a soldier. Such a supposition, from meeting a person armed in these districts, must not always be inferred, for few ever

go unarmed. Many bear a single sword, whilst others again much impede their flight, (the only substitute for courage they are acquainted with) by absolutely burthening themselves with weapons. The more I gazed upon him the more strong became my suspicion that he was a soldier. In removing his weapons from the spot, I first beheld them in, he handled them with dexterity, and his actions displayed him as well acquainted with their use as their value. The hand of age was upon him, for that in Indian climates precedes scarcely the age of declining manhood, as reckoned in other colder atmospheres, yet his whole contour bespoke the vigour of youth was not entirely suppressed within him. His bust and frame gave indication of how severe must be the struggle of time to overcome him. The light beaming eye, and arched eyebrow, the well-formed nose, and high forehead of this individual, gave an intelligence to his countenance, which received a becoming dignity from the noble growth of beard which flowed in easy curls of fleecy whiteness upon his manly chest.

The recital of my misfortunes, losing my way, and forced to halt ere I had overtaken my bag-

gage, which from his description was far distant, found an attentive listener in the stranger. Besides this, it served as a commencement to a more general conversation than the mutual interchange of coldly forced compliments, with which I hoped to chase sleep away from my weary eyelids. It would have been any thing but prudent to trust myself to repose, in such a plight as I was then in. Although I could not exchange my garments, I yet removed from me such portions as I could spare, and held them to dry. Throwing aside all restraint, and by a series of questions, the most eligible methods of enticing a native to easy confidence, I soon won him over from his diffidence, and discovered him to be a most amusing companion. It struck me, from a knowledge of the military character, that to revert to warlike topics of conversation, sooner than any other plan, might lead to a developement of the stranger's situation in life, and his present occupation; consequently, the successful operations against the fortress of Bhurtpoor, in offering themselves as a pretext for introducing such subjects as I wished, I gladly availed myself of; for I only wish it were possible to give every one

a taste for eliciting information by inuendo, rather than point blank questions. Now for instance, is it not insufferably annoying in society, when after much difficulty, you have brought the conversation to the very point you aim at, and are at the instant, commencing a well wrought tale of bloodshed ; throwing out hints how much you should have liked to have been there, to signify your profession, &c. &c., to be at once frustrated by the gentleman at the end of the table, with the hooked nose, large ears, low forehead, and piggish eyes, a worthy uncle, to whom you are to be heir, if he likes the measure, putting the question at once to you : “ But you are a military man, are you not, Tom ? ” Now the query itself would be nothing, if you were not forced to answer it, to gratify the old man’s vanity, and thus you are thrown out ; dare not go half the length you otherwise would, for fear of incredulous smiles, hints at the marvellous nature of the tale, or allowances being made for your being “ one of the trade.” Thus it is, that there is generally so little conversation, because, “ are you, or are you not,” can only be answered by “ yes, and no,” and admit of no gentle deceptions ; shall I use

so strong a word to keep your friend in ignorance, and prolong your own importance, as an "Unknown," and his desire to unravel the mystery. In doing which, after your departure, he again, you see, in drawing conclusions from your hints, has an opportunity of displaying his passion and talent for logic. And thus you may be said, to live and let live, an old proverb, but not quite so generally understood as it ought to be in society.

It would be as useless to hope to avoid a disclosure of yourself or profession, after appearing at church in your full regimentals, or to disguise being a married woman after wearing a ring of a certain description, as to flatter yourself into a belief of escaping detection, when opposed to a point blank man, who, if you answer him surlily, makes the cap fit you, or, if you incline to taciturnity, has "silence gives consent," and a grin from the company to floor you with. But, stop a moment, or I shall go on for ever, as an occurrence of this kind has often made my blood boil within me, and upon recollection yet continues to do so. I had no sooner mentioned the taking of Bhurtpoor, than the stranger seemed exultingly glad, although it struck me, he evidently was not quite

satisfied with the truth of my assertions. Upon a farther explanation of the matter, however, he said, he firmly believed it, for if in our earlier career in India, we had been enabled to withstand Tippoo and all his power, when his star sat brightly at one moment only to rise again with more splendour at another, as his intrigues and ambition were crowned with success, what could Bhurtpoor offer as opposition in these more mature years of our successful arms. “No,” he continued, “all, all is now gone, and beyond retrieve; each day brings us intelligence of the defeat of the Company’s foes, obtained to, chiefly, by natives of the very district, their victorious arms subdued. Such is, I have heard, the effect of discipline, wholly unknown amongst ourselves. Severity of example, and the free dispersion of wealth, gain us partizans, but more than such stimulus as this is required to make an honest, loyal soldier. Discipline, discipline,” he repeated, “what has it not effected in your native army—has it not reduced to a coward, the assassin who amongst us would have raised a bold and daring front; has it not, although as yet almost imperceptibly, divested superstition of its power?

Has it not controuled the turbulent, and hurried even the hand of the son against his father, if such are the commands of his superiors; and how many that enter your service, the lowest of the low caste, the most depraved amongst the dissolute, perhaps with murder on their hands, or having left a wife and family to starvation and disgrace, in passing through the ordeal of your discipline, are, when age and incipient infirmity have brought them on your pension list, returned to their villages in affluence, and to be a striking example of the justice of their employers.

“Such, however, was not the case with my forefathers. Or high, or low, or rolling in wealth, or more than indigent; fortune either favoured their exaltation, or ensured their debasement, or else, where, I may ask, would have been Beejapoor, Hyderabad, Ahmednugger, Delhi, Ahmedabad, and a thousand other lost sovereignties, which, to mention the fall of, is to accuse those long since gone, of negligence. But I must arouse the Patell—excuse your slave for a moment.”

CHAPTER V.

EFFECTS OF THE FALL OF BHURTPOOR—COMPARISON
—KINDNESS—PATELL, HIS OBSTINACY—USE OF A
BRIBE—FARTHER DESCRIPTION OF THE STRANGER—
CONVERSATION—PART FROM HIM, AND START TO
FIND MY SERVANTS.

THE fall of Bhurtpoor, was no less pleasing to myself than to him who had just addressed me, although our feelings of delight arose from opposite considerations. He saw in the family reigning over the city of Bhurtpoor and adjacent country, the descendants of those who had contributed, in some measure, to the downfall of Delhi; whereas, I could only have sighed, without religious enthusiasm to swell my murmurs, over our former failure before that fortress, because it was always upon the lips of him who scoffed at our power, and certainly tended much

to attach truth to the widely circulated reports of supernatural agency having directed the operations of that defence. I now firmly believe that as this extensive fortification has been stormed and taken, we have only to demonstrate our intentions of attack in other quarters, and receive capitulation.

How often, during our pilgrimage through this life, it may be justly remarked, do we find the most essential difference in character, manners, and religious feeling, become compromised by circumstances, more especially if they are brought in contact by misfortune, or even unexpectedly. There is in human nature, when left to itself, a kind generous warmth one towards another, that will more or less develop itself as the pursuits of mankind leave room for individuals to practise it. We must expect that the minds of men which are now on the rack to satisfy a thirst for gain, now urged to employ every moment for the indulgence of ambition, or now hurled into one excess to hide another, will be, of course, sooner blunted by misfortune than those of the female. Her sorrows, perhaps, chiefly confined to her family, have some definable end, and she

has leisure often granted her to contemplate them in advance, and to seek aid in religion. Besides, they leave a lasting impression of their severity, because they are not immediately followed by others, which cause intense excitement, and lead the mind to forget the former ones, in the eagerness to avoid those which succeed. Such is always the case with man; his exigencies demand immediate decision, he must perhaps crush others or fall himself; the time is short for consideration, his brain is fired into madness with despair, or heated with the brilliant hopes of the future, which his imagination offers; and thus he often acts contrary to the generous impulse of his own character, and has eventually become less remarkable for real kindness and charity than the female. I cannot help thus far premising, what I have to say of the Mahommedan I thus unexpectedly met, as the treatment I received may appear inconsistent with the general opinion entertained of this race of people.

The time has been, and that not long since, when such a companion as I now was associating with, when the Mahommedan with whom I had just become acquainted, would have rather gloried

in the wretched plight of a christian soldier, than have offered him assistance. But the change of character wrought by their exchanging the titles of conquerors for that of conquered, by a nation of foreigners and opposed religion, has produced throughout India a vastly different feeling amongst all classes of the inhabitants. Their wealth, splendour, and show, have alike vanished, their thrones are now but footstools, and each new generation has still less of magnificence and grandeur to dwell among. The christian now holds the reins of government, uses moderation in his measures, and consults more essentially the happiness of those millions of souls committed to his care—and, consequently, a people accustomed from early life to flatter and fawn, and always conducting themselves with servility, know not how to emerge from that state of dependance they are reduced to. Where before they would have oppressed, when their sovereigns were “the lights of the universe” or “the splendour of the world,” they now readily bend the knee.

“Saheb,” said the stranger, “what your slave can effect in amelioration of your unpleasant situation, he will not be unwilling to perform. Al-

though if your dish was offered me, my religion would forbid my touching its contents, the same scruples are not, I am well acquainted, attached to your persuasion. Would to God I had the power to show you those attentions I could wish. My short residence at Delhi, has given me an insight into the customs your countrymen observe, and I can consequently proffer you a portion of my cooked victuals, without, I hope, offending. They are, truly, plain in the extreme; but as the rights of hospitality may with justice be demanded of me in your case, allow me to offer them, such as they are, for your consideration, and I trust they may prove acceptable. There is also my calleoon, which you can use, if you will dispense with the tube or snake, and draw your draught through the hole it fixes in in the cocoa-nut. It is a shabby, horsekeeper sort of pipe, but best calculated both for travelling and my finances."

This was an offer by no means to be refused, and I accordingly acquiesced most unhesitatingly.

"Let them be brought forward," said I, "at your earliest convenience, and I make no doubt but that I shall soon convince you how much I ap-

preciate your kindness and sympathy for my lot. If even, my religious persuasion, or a prejudice in favour of any creed I may profess, was allowed, upon ordinary occasions, any sway in the direction of what it is, or might be lawful or unlawful for me to eat, there would be some doubt of its exercising any controul over my present appetite, in this particular situation; and may not a Mahomedan entertain such feelings? I believe he may, for he is not forced, when overtaken by unavoidable misfortune, to relinquish life in refusing sustenance. But this is no time for talking or choosing either, more especially the latter, when I am wholly thrown upon the charity of another, so well competent to assist me in my distress, as well as willing, both of which you are."

The old man, pleased with the remark I had made, (for where can you find one wholly disinclined to listen to the voice of flattery,) now began to exert himself in earnest. Rummaging amongst his saddle furniture, removing now a large yellow piece of cloth, and now one after another, a cloak and cumlee, then a large square of cotton texture, much resembling sail cloth, until he had reached the fastening to which appended his stirrups, he at

length gained a communication with his pair of carpet saddle bags ; he took therefrom some unleavened wheaten cakes, coarse and brown in appearance, but which doubtless would be found savoury to the taste when hunger was to be the arbiter, and like the president, on general occasions, have the power of a casting vote. Having replaced these again in rotation, beginning with the last, and crowning the cushioned pile, a native fashioned saddle, assumes, in appearance, with the best and gayest of the stuffs ; he advanced hastily to the front of that part of the shed we occupied, and ejaculated, with the uninterrupted exercise of his lungs, which characterizes one determined to be heard, “ Here, you Merwan Khan, and you too, Shaik Bungush, can’t you hear me ? asleep, aye, I’ll awaken you, if not by my own voice, with the twang of a bamboo about your shoulders. Merwan Khan, Shaik Bungush, Array Ullah, in the name of Heaven, where are you, why your fatigues have a more drowsy effect upon you than all the opium your fondness for intoxicating dreams bids you take, or could produce, where are you now, am I never to be heard ? I say never.”

As his voice echoed throughout the building,

two stout young Mussulmen vaulting from the ground, in an opposite corner of the Durrumsollah to our one, staring around them, and who, from the imperfect light of the fire, on my reaching it, had as yet remained undiscovered to me, started up as if from an ambuscade, advanced hastily, having recognized his call, touched the earth with the tips of their fingers, raised their hands to their foreheads, bending forward at the same moment, and now with folded arms awaited their master's further orders.

“Why, you lazy Hurumzadehs,” said the old man, “it was in vain I summoned you to my presence. You give yourselves up so entirely to sleep, you will yet have to—like myself before you are much older—acquire in youth the habit of always sleeping with one ear at least awake on duty, and attentive to the wishes and orders of your chief. Hear me; if, when in camp, such slumbers as yours awaited Khans and nobles, whose situation ever so justly fulfilled, must make foes from amongst the envious, and enemies of the intemperate and ill-disposed, what caution would the assassin require in performing his deep laid plots for revenge? None whatever, I

say! for although I strained a voice, that has been heard towering aloft midst the busy bustle and clanging tumult of a hard-fought battle, you slumbered on, as if the very owl had hushed its shrieking cry, or the pee-wit gone to rest for fear of disturbing you. Do not be again so lazy, you Hurumzadehs,* or next time, in lieu of threatening with the Bamboo, I shall awaken you with it. Recollect, my sons;† heed what I say; it is the voice of reason that salutes you.”

Indulging for a moment in thought, perhaps as much intended as an opportunity of recovering his breath, he added; “ You Merwan Khan are, I believe, the youngest; hasten to the Patell, inform him a Saheb has arrived, and requires of him some dry wood for fuel, and some milk, and take my Lord’s syce‡ with you for some ground grain for his horse. If they at his house, are as sleepy as you have been, you must exert patience equal to mine, until you arouse them; take no excuse, but make him appear. Let expedition

* *Hurumzadeh*.—Base born.

† *My sons*.—A native is always familiar with his servants

‡ *Syce*.—Horsekeeper.

be an earnest of your endeavours. Be off: you are dismissed. You Shaik Bungush, bring the remnants of the pillaw* you cooked this evening, and a platter to place these cakes upon. No, wait, bring my brazen dish, and see you clean it well. Here, throw more logs upon the fire. Perhaps with these you can manage to appease your appetite," turning towards me as he uttered the phrase, "and dry your linen, as we have not a change to give you the use of, Saheb."

Merwan Khan presently returned, in company with the head of the village functionaries; for each, it must be understood, has its regulated number, whose respective ranks have for ages been determined, and to which much attention is invariably paid. He was a little obsequious Brahmin, whose countenance was the very symbol of bigotry, avarice, and cunning. Often had I before experienced great trouble from these people in procuring grass as well as other necessities, which it is their bounden duty to furnish travellers with; yet in no one instance did I ever hear more

* *Pillaw*.—A dish of meat and rice, flavoured with butter, and roasted sweetmeats.

vexatious prevarication, or witness more determined opposition to my wishes than on this occasion. The little callous obstinate being, with his carcoon, or village clerk behind him, bearing his ink-stand, to whom I was introduced, and who even forgot to remove his slippers, when he ascended from the court-yard to the shed, found a ready excuse for not satisfying my demands, in however plausible a shape I pleaded them. The hour was unusual for such requests; the whole inhabitants locked in sleep (as others also were, rejoined the Mahommedan, until I aroused them, which I suppose I shall have to do to your friends, Mr. Patell) and the late unfavourable season had put the villagers to the greatest stress to support their own cattle, many of which had died of actual starvation, which, I suppose," added the Mussulman, "you wish a stranger and his horse to do, most merciful Brahmin. If I only had my way with you all I would burn your houses about your ears, you old bigot, and teach you how to exercise the rights of hospitality, or remove you from the possibility of having guests to insult, by turning you loose upon the world bareheaded and moneyless."

The Brahmin, boiling with rage, yet not daring to answer, disrespectfully, in my presence, continued:—"The heaps of fire-wood collected around the villagers' houses, for want of a proper covering, had been rendered unfit for immediate use by the heavy fall of rain; the cattle had been housed for hours, after having been drained of their accustomed supply of milk, which he much regretted." In short, although willing himself to assist me in this extremity, how could he controul the hand of fate, which was so unpropitious. Could he argue against destiny, or what could he do? If I would explain he would obey.

When I remonstrated, and threatened to complain to the proper authorities for his removal from office, he placed the open palms of his hands over his ears, looked insufferably placid, shook his head, and was alike ignorant of the language I spoke, and the meaning I intended to convey to him.

But experience had taught me a never failing specific with a native, in the shape of a bribe, with which I hoped to quiet his scruples, and turn his dogged indifference into willing energy in my behalf. To this I had recourse as a last

effort, in the way of verbose explanation of my wishes, which, had it failed, might have brought down upon him the full effects of continuing to fret and play with a naturally hasty temper, which had been thwarted for many hours; and might have cost this object of Hindoo respect and sacred character the sufferings of a sound thrashing, for to such my exasperation would have doubtless carried me. Luckily, however, as its effects were favourable in the extreme, I was spared the trouble of so doing.

“If,” said I, “you do not immediately procure for me the articles of firewood and milk, as well as grass, which you are required by your employers, as a duty, to do, I shall certainly help myself.” “And I am ready, with my followers, to assist you,” added the Mahommedan. “It is not the first time I have assisted in taming the obstinacy of these scoundrels. Why don’t you, Saheb, get a few hundred horse quartered upon the village, as my forefathers would have done, when, like locusts in a field of vegetation, they would doubtless eat up every thing appearing in view, and worth their

having. Aye, Saheb, you are too kind to these fellows. Look at that sword: if it could tell you a tale or two, it might inform you how better to argue than by words; and if you could only see all the obstinate asses it has served as a monitor to, it would shew you how to leave a lasting trace behind you." Interrupting his enthusiasm in my cause, I continued: "as, however the lateness of the hour, and my fatigue, may render this an unpleasant task, I am willing to give you two rupees,* as a recompense for your trouble, and to spare some to myself. You hear my decision; take your choice, and let me no longer be delayed."

The latter end of this speech was perfectly intelligible; and, in a few moments, my wants, as well as those of my horse, were attended to. Before this crafty specimen of human nature quitted my presence, he gratuitously offered his services to grant a further supply, if necessary; not omitting to enquire at what time I should wish a guide in attendance, "and be my neck upon it, but you shall find, Saheb, a faithful

* *Rupee*.—A current coin.

one." Obeisances upon obeisances followed; and, thank God, I have never beheld him again, either as friend or foe.

My meal, at length, was ready; Shaik Bungush had warmed the cakes with a slight heat, added a little ghee to soften them, improved the pillaw, separated the grains of the rice, which had formed into one dense mass at the bottom of the cooking pot; and, ere long, I was a stranger to all the fretfulness, and other disagreeable concomitants of a violent and unappeased appetite. What more was wanting to complete my satisfaction, add to my comfort, and restore a harmony to my mind and body, was sought for and obtained in some conversation with my host, and puffs of smoke from my lighted cigar, in opposition to his long and more laborious draughts from his pipe.

As we gradually threw off reserve, I at length went so far as to offer my brandy bottle to the stranger, taking care not to hint at my having ever placed my mouth to the neck of it, and assuring him, that such a night as this demanded the use of liquors. But no! he strenuously resisted my offer; yet, at the same time, he seemed, I

thought, not dissatisfied with my politeness. Gradually advancing in our disclosures, the old man at length acknowledged, that although the military profession had been the chief desire of his heart, and that, by which he had, for many years, supported himself, he had been forced, by misfortunes, to mingle many other occupations with it, during his long and varying life. Nevertheless, I could discover his martial feelings were in no wise subdued, and had made a deep impression upon his general character. The bivouac was, apparently, no stranger to him; and experience had furnished him, doubtless, with anecdote, and vivacity of humour.

“Habituated as you have been, friend,” I remarked, “to a military career, both in the time of your youthful feelings, and in the more mature years of life; when the one has overrated, from the warmth of your enthusiasm, or charms of novelty, the scenes you have witnessed; and the other tended to bring them within the scope of a fairer criterion to judge by, you might, perhaps, be inclined to add one to the many favours you have bestowed upon me already, by gifting me with a page from

your book of knowledge, the accumulated worth of years of experience; far better than the ravings of infirmity, or the theory of well instructed youth. You will, perhaps, favour me with some tale, delineative of the more immediate life and manners of your countrymen, in their domestic mode of conduct, than any information we foreigners are enabled to glean from actual observation."

"True," said my host; "and I might be inclined to accede to your proposal, were I not convinced of this fact, that what would be most interesting for you to hear, would be most painful for me openly to relate, or give you a chance of guessing at from my confessions. "Excuse me, then, for having made the request," I rejoined. "My only reason for asking you was, from a consciousness that the nature of your religious persuasions, and particular prejudices have, by diligent research, been long since determined; whereas, the absence of mutual ties of kindred feeling between your nation and my own, (as well as all intercourse being suspended in the inviolable sanctity of your harems, not to particularize the insur-

mountable barrier to a mutual interchange of affection which exists between the Mahommedan and Christian, in a religious point of view,) has been the cause of a total failure in discovering your private feelings."

"All this is true," said my new acquaintance; "and, doubtless, the natural anxiety the Saheb Loog* entertain, to become more intimately acquainted with our particular manners, has been augmented by the difficulties which have been opposed, to check their daring perseverance in their search after beauty, and a knowledge of how the Mahommedan conducts himself in his private life. Not only those that have existed, but must yet continue to do so, if my countrymen wish to preserve that honour they have once attained to; and in relinquishing which, more particularly at this moment, they must for ever sink into disgrace and infamy. When once constrained, by whatever force or power, to throw open the way to curiosity, and then to be no longer able to follow his manners and his

* *Saheb loog*.—The former means gentleman, the latter, people, as used in reference to Europeans.

customs unwatched, what will remain to the Islamite to induce him to prolong the support of life. No! nowhere can you find, Saheb, the Mahommedan, who would, up to this hour, willingly divulge, even to a friend, or confide to any other but his own bosom, the secrets of his harem and his family. And such I hope may, during my remaining sojourn in this world, continue to be the case; as I shall then die, in the enjoyment of that faith and of those customs, and have that secret mystery attached to my actions, which it has been my pleasure to dwell upon, and which has often gained me respect; when, otherwise, I might have been passed by unheeded, if not suffered from indignities worse than withheld civilities.

“ Under such circumstances, said I and to such an extent, it would be as unreasonable to expect, as impolitic for you to repose in another, such undivided and unrestrained confidence. And if any other of your persuasion, who ought to have inherited similar determination with yourself, should make another of a different persuasion, such a confident as your remarks tend justly to disapprove of, I should as much reprobate him

as you would. But what impropriety can there be in relating any common incident which may have come under your personal observation, delineative of general character, under a mask of feigned rank and name; even the scene of the action may be so metamorphosed, as to elude all search after the truth. Such is with us, (and we are tenacious of our rights,) a general mode adopted in the writings of the present day, and whilst armed with these weapons, we preserve youth from the snares of the impostor, we convey much useful rebuke to the guilty party, who is thus made aware that his actions are as far from being guileless as unknown. It opens at once the road to amendment, and the way to avoid error. Thus is knowledge conveyed under the pleasing form of fictitious narrative.

“And what more delightful mode could you have determined upon. The history of my own life would suffice for the purpose you have mentioned, Khodavind,” he continued, “spent, as it has been, midst scenes of battle, strife, and victory, or defeat, as the omnipotent hand of Allah has been outstretched to save and to destroy. What have I not experienced from the will of

fate; and yet to recall these events to my recollection, would be a bitter struggle for my feelings to contend against. But still, with all these disadvantages, acutely alive to the propriety of concealment, and sincerely attached to my own persuasions, I would sooner relate my own actions to you, than trust to the ear of a stranger, circumstances relating to others, which they may have wished buried in oblivion, when they sought refreshment from the turmoils of this life in the stillness of the grave. My association with camp, and my intercourse with private life, has developed much to my view, which I should as soon have endeavoured to dive into, as to remove the veil from off the face of my brother's wife,—had I one; but still I can prevent disclosing them to others, and such shall be my line of conduct. What is past is gone, and I am unwilling to give the past even a thought in the present moment. So many years," he added, with increasing warmth, "have glided by since the Moslem rule and sway directed the fate of empire, prostrating bigoted sovereigns before the thrones of my forefathers to hear their fate, and our victorious arms were the ready instru-

ments of the propagation of the faith of Islamism, that the present day is only fit to feed the appetite of sorrow and repine." He paused.

"Why is it thus, friend? Are not the quiet peaceful times now, compared with the scenes of tumult, oppression, and misrule of days gone by, far preferable? Trace back to the disastrous reign of Mahomed Toghlucluck Shah, when the ancient capital was deserted, and Delhi was left almost tenantless. Think of the numbers that then perished, solely to flatter the vanity of a monarch, and mingle their sorrows with his gratification. Revert again to the blood spilt when Nadir Shah, in all the zenith of his greatness, sat an arbiter over the fate of thousands of souls, who, in irritating him, gave him opportunity to display that ferocity of character, and unbending cruelty he was accustomed to indulge in, and could gaze upon with serenity. And all that, occasioned by the revolting treachery of those, the weakness of an infatuated monarch, gave birth to, and the absence of patriotic feelings fostered. Again who so much tended to shake your mighty power as Aurungzebe, although extolled as Aulum Gir, or the conqueror of the world; was it not

him, who led to the eventual downfall of the Beejapoor sovereignty, by weakening the King to gratify his own ambition? Even religion, the source from which he drew his power, failed to exercise any control over him when on the throne; he had the power to crush those of his caste, who resided in other kingdoms, and he joyfully added the will. Ponder on the bloodshed and anarchy attendant on the elevation of a new emperor to the throne of the Moghuls. Trace the fate of the unhappy Delhians, throughout the reign of a despot, when security was an utter stranger to them, and riches and affluence but beckoned on the minions of the Satrap, to murder those who possessed them: think of the father bewailing the loss of his only much loved son, a widow of a husband, a brother of a sister, and a mother brooding in sad despair over the total annihilation of her family, slain by the remorseless hand of an uncompromising usurper, securing the throne to himself with human sacrifice:—and then contrast with it, Delhi, such as you have lately seen it, and I think the difference will become too striking to admit of any doubt, as to the result, of our rule and sway.

“There will be little difference of opinion between us, Saheb, upon this subject. What you represent is just and true, but allow your slave to ask, in what manner can the soldier benefit from these changes? Ours was a military nation in toto, arms are the Mahommedan’s pride, victory his pursuit, and death, with glory, his ambition. Yet fate must dictate the hour when he must obtain this ; whether when slumbering in his bed, or urging on his steed into the thickest ranks of the enemy—the hour is decided upon. With all its glories crowned, or marked with all its severity, bloodshed, famine, disease, and wounds, war was our very food, and how can we now exist? The sword which so long has kept the whole of Hindostan fluctuating, as each province rose into splendour and affluence, or was plundered and devastated, is at length sheathed ; and he to whom battle was familiarized, and looked upon as a livelihood, now sinks into disgrace and infamy. Was not our empire without any fixed limits whatever, when we consider that the force of arms alone put bounds to our acquisition? We were not formerly to be persuaded, or guided by others, only in proportion as they could oppose

the current of our victories. If the throne descended to the active, vigilant, and brave—conquest followed upon conquest : if on the contrary, sloth and inactivity were inherent of the royal person, the rebellious or disaffected lopped off by degrees, some portions of our former acquisitions ; and when the retributive justice was sought in battle, the soldier had an opportunity of signaling himself, or fulfilling his lot. These endless tumults and confusion added additional value to military services. Such has once been, but now the upturn and uprooted power of my ancestors is unable to cause any, even the slightest fluctuation in our affairs. Hemmed in on all sides, by an overwhelming force, which has aggrandized itself as we fell into a decayed, powerless nation, we can acquire nothing, and our situation in these quarters is too insignificant to attract attention.

But as regards the cultivator's situation in life, is it wholly to be disregarded? What was his lot hitherto? The pressing charge, the dense mass of infantry, alike in its progress, crushed all his hopes in the destruction of his crops. The thousands of followers attached to the imperial camps, left traces of their destructive violence

wherever they passed. The villager's cot was unroofed for the meal of the baggage cattle, his children pressed to bear burthens, his cattle either slain for food, or wantonly mutilated; and often has it happened, that the fond companion of his pastoral life, has been robbed from him, and never again returned to comfort and assist him. Is this a false picture, may I ask?"

"No, by no means; I will be candid. My soul is, and has been, bent upon military achievement, and I must deplore such a total subversion of my hopes as I have witnessed. The cultivator does receive every benefit from the present arrangements. But to him alone can it be said advantages are given. He has a livelihood to support him and his family, but can he improve upon this? can he become a leader of the people now? and what can he save for his children if they cannot work for themselves. If from birth they have remained maimed or weak, what can the father leave behind him for such unfortunates, when every employment of emolument, pardon me, is in the hand of strangers. No, no, toil they may, but reward, as the sage saith, "is only to be found in heaven." With all the faults of their

rulers—with all the misfortune that has been heaped upon the unfortunate inhabitants of Delhi, for ages past, what Mahommedan would not, if the clarion sounded, at the instance of a fit commander, rush to the fight, to regain what has been lost, and throw off a forced allegiance? Who would not hail its return to splendour and magnificence with delight? But no: it is otherwise ordained, or little would care for the future, or regret for the past; corrode the welcome feelings such a blessing would bestow. As you have represented the case, so has it been; the widow has been a sorrower, the father has bathed his beard with the bitter tear of anguish, the brother has wiped the eye of affliction without avail, but little can the stranger appreciate the enthusiasm of the Moslem, if he conceives that the cup of bitterness could not be drugged with any ingredient able to soften its effects. Yes; I have seen a whole country devastated and laid waste, to furnish materials for the mighty host pressing on to meet a foe. I have witnessed all the horrors and calamities your knowledge of the past enables you to furnish; but still, on the part of the sufferers, a

gleam—a faint shadow of retaliation, has not been without avail; a certain helplessness, and long engrafted tone of servility from the first glimmering of knowledge, have made these sufferings apparently most acute, or even past human endurance, pass by in the consummation of fatality, and be soon forgotten.”

CHAPTER VI.

CONTINUATION OF EXPLANATION—RESUMPTION OF
MARCH—THE RIVER MHYE IN ITS GRANDEUR—
POSITION—A GROUPE—UNEXPECTED MEETING.

“To day,” continued the veteran, “fortune placed us amongst the aggressed, and misfortune bore us to the ground, as the mighty tempest subdues the elastic bamboo, and bends it to the earth ; yet on the morrow, forgetful of what had befallen us, we again reared our heads aloft, and utterly regardless of the curses we had solicited from Allah, to confound our oppressors, were found ranked amongst the aggressing. Such was the state of feeling existing in the breasts of the gay and thoughtless thousands, which daily thronged the bazaars of Delhi, now basking in the sunshine of the monarch’s presence, or now for ever denied it in solitary imprisonment. They could

not dive into the secret mysteries of their good or bad fortune, and therefore awaited the time of misfortune, heedless of its approach, or too much blinded by self-pride, and the lucky moments then enjoyed, to have a care or sorrow. Accordingly, as chance directed, or the caprice of fortune dictated, they were debased or exalted. But of all emotions of the human mind, not one was half so predominant as intrigue. It was here, there, and every where. The most minute action of life partook of it. The father in his communications with his son, tried to outmatch him in some degree, whilst friend met friend, only to deceive mutually, and the husband and wife were often as far removed from the happiness of each others' confidence, as if utter strangers. One and all fearful of their lives and property, were forced to have recourse to every scheme, that yielded the most remote hope of success, or the slightest chance of self-preservation. The public weal was universally abandoned, and private aggrandizement usurped the control of mental energy, directing the whole system of action, in the road of avarice. Regardless of life, when ambition spurred them on, they were reckless of it.

“To aid the gratification of selfish conceptions, surrounded as they were with others running headlong the same course as themselves, it required the exercise of uncommon cunning and sagacity, mingled with prompt execution of formed resolutions, at whatever risk and hazard, to prevent the possibility of being outwitted. The eye of pity and commiseration was entirely blinded in this mighty city. A love of splendour, delight in spectacle, had usurped the whole soul. It was only in proportion to the number of followers, extent of “largesse” and brilliant display that an individual was esteemed. Even with treason on his hands, the well-known murderer was allowed to escape his long merited reward, and often was nearest in favour with the Shah, whose necessities added value to the service of such a man.

“Again, if the purpose were to slay, or the event became reversed in the slaughter of an aggressor, no example salutary to public morals was elicited. There was no reward given to him who had nobly defended himself, and shaken off one terror from the public mind; for seldom did the knowledge of the circumstance escape, in consequence of the

inviolable secrecy in which the guilty are fain to wrap their misdeeds, and the dreadful consequences which might have ensued to the survivor, from treachery and design, if once recognized. The sword and dagger were momentarily at work, but seldom from want of a police, or active and determined set of armed men, paid for the detection of delinquents, did such acts of violence become generally known. Or, if all were disclosed, the death of the unfortunate, the punishment of the offender, and the instigation of the crime, were alike confounded, in an over-reliance (you will call it Saheb) in the all-powerful sway of that destiny, which my countrymen believe accompanies them through every act of their life-time. Bloodshed, was too constant a sight in the streets of Delhi, and elsewhere, not to make death a matter of little concern in the minds of those, with whom fatalism has most decided power. When they were hourly witnesses to the destruction of life, could they be expected to attach any very vital importance to the coming of that, no one can control? No! they gazed upon a lifeless corpse with as much complacency, as they had learned to contemplate the resignation of that, which would add

themselves to the number already consigned by the hand of tyranny and injustice to the silence of the grave; and luckily, it was so decreed, it mitigated the severity of their situation in life, where it was impossible to avoid seeing what, if you could behold, even soldier as you, Saheb, are, would make you shudder, and points out how wonderfully the all-merciful Allah has studied the comfort of man, in giving him a yielding disposition, able to accommodate itself to the necessities of the moment. Even in the midst of these scenes, insecure in his own person, and uncertain of his wealth, the Mahommedan yet knew how to smile and to enjoy the present pleasures afforded him. Oh! many were the advantages this system of society afforded the Moslem, as an individual, which were denied to their empire at large. Patriots were wanting, yet many happy persons dwelt within sight of the royal person. Look at my ancestors. Were you made acquainted with, and been taught as I have been, what their swords have gained for them, and from early life-time cherished as I have done the intoxicating hope, of continuing their highly-prized fame with posterity, by imitating their bright example, how

would the present prospect accord with such ideas. They made their way, from the cottage to the situation of high command,—from the darkness of indigence to the splendour of rank, through hard fought fields, and through the mazes of intrigue, acquiring riches, glory, honour, affluence, and power, whilst their prowess has been the wonder of the age, and instrument of their aggrandizement. These have I also unremittingly sought, but the day was too far spent, when my time arrived to find aught but disappointment, and what now remains only presents a far worse prospect for my contemplation; and pray, may I ask, would not your situation, if such as mine, engender a life of pining and regret?”

“Doubtless it might,” said I. “Under inactivity and want of proper employment, the mind becomes diseased, and is too apt to add to its forlornness, in looking forward on a dismal future, by depicting over strongly in the exercise of memory the blessings of the days gone by. The past has always the advantage of the present; we see the past in all its glories without being enabled to judge of its embitterments, whereas, perhaps, when we are drawing to our imagina-

tions a cursory review of by-gone events--of hours now no longer ours, the present moment is one of trial and affliction, and gives to our minds a portion of its withering blast, to yet farther chill a cheerless prospect, and enhance a supposedly happy one. Few historians can give us such minute and accurate accounts of each envied individual's life as to afford a fair scope for judgment. If they wish the welfare of mankind, or have a family verging on towards manhood, they are too apt to display virtue, ability, and talent, crowned with a corresponding reward, in riches and glory, withholding the darker traits of character and the bitter moments of adversity. If not entirely withdrawn, they are but partially developed. Like a recruiting officer, who wins a victory without numbering the slain on the occasion; who pictures to you his own promotion, and his happiness, without telling of the years he served, and stripes he has endured before he attained to, or was fitted for the situation he then holds. All stimulus to thirst for fame is artfully made use of, and experience left to teach us the rest."

"Your arguments," replied my host, "are not

at all wanting in reason, and your conclusions are just, friend. Oft in the latter years of my existence have I reviewed scenes of early youth, and found every requisite for happiness blended in happy union in them ; but then again, how different were my ideas at the moment they occurred. To be brief, these are times now, when the mind of the Mahomedan, if tinctured with the proper feelings of his race, has nothing left, either to enjoy or to anticipate. Not a single ray of hope is to be derived from either retrospective or prospective thoughts ; for the former pourtray what we have been, and might have continued to be to this very hour, had not internal dissensions in disuniting all parties weakened our empire ; and the latter only tends to convince us of our present nothingness. The power of the Moghuls is fast fading from substance into shadow ; no longer have we cities, or is our court filled with Mahomedan Omrahs, Khans, and men of power. Our principalities and our palaces are deserted, and the sun of glory, which once rose to illuminate with splendour the reign of our several dynasties, is now setting in mournful majesty over our fallen kingdoms. The soldier is become a

mere useless drug in the bazaar of life, I repeat, neither sought after nor are his services accepted when proffered. Indeed I may, I fear, add, what God alone can prevent and may forbid, that religion seems to have felt the shock."

Having ended thus, he arose, made his obeisance, and departed. It was fully evident that the subject our conversation had reverted to, had put his feelings to a severe test, for he had in his unguarded and excited state, been forced to make a confession, which tortures perhaps, would, if put in practice, have failed to have elicited. He had dwelt upon his own situation; and could any one have more justly discussed the merits of it? No; deny it who can, however his religious enthusiasm may blind him against conviction: the Mussulmanic power in Hindostan has most materially deteriorated. What is the modern court of Delhi, compared with what it was two centuries ago; when royalty, in the highest state of refinement, brought every luxury before it at a nod; and when music, dancing, song, and festivity, reigned paramount in this beautiful city, hushing sorrow to repose, or drowning it in forgetfulness? Contrast with

it the imperial dignity and situation of the present emperor.

Left alone, a successive train of thought came over me, and led me to contrast his situation with my own. Without the prospect of another campaign, to disturb the monotony of my present life, my military career even was irksome; for each day, as it passed, bore a close resemblance to its precursor, and the succeeding one only offered the same pursuits for choice and amusement. Although the future had somewhat to enhance the value of its prospects, in a certain elevation of rank, and comparative ease in the winter of old age, these, to a youthful mind, are poor incitements to pleasure, when the waste of the prime of life, in a foreign land, where health is an utter stranger, is thrown in the opposite balance. Few, indeed, are there, who can justly appreciate the services of one doomed to a lengthened career in India, but those who have already passed such an ordeal, or are far through the period. Cast but one glimpse around: contemplate how few, of the many you may have known but a few years since, yet remain, and all those cut off in the

very bloom of youth ; and is it reasonably just to anticipate that you can outlive your period of service ? so that, what signifies, in the end, the pension you have long sought after, only relinquished with your life, or obtained when disease has impaired every faculty, and leaves you to regret the past, and abhor the present.

Such was my situation ; bad enough ! but mark that of the Mahommedan. In the decline of that court which had once been the wonder of the world, and pride of his race, he, as well as every other Mahommedan, must anticipate the removal of every prop which has hitherto supported, although feebly, the tottering mass of their influence in India. It is worthy the remark of any curious traveller, to trace how very rapidly the Mahommedan population is lost around and about a city which, in itself, presents a poor picture of luxury for them to dwell upon. The inundating force of conquest has often, throughout India, destroyed sovereignties ; and the immediate evacuation of the districts, when inhabited by the followers of the prophet Mahomed, has invariably followed. This, doubtless, was vividly portrayed to his

own mind; and he could, therefore, only anticipate like results, from what the weakest mortal could divine as near at hand—the gradual, yet total loss of all their former possessions. The English already, he knew, possessed almost the whole tract of country from which the Imperial treasures were filled; and where the absolute revenue of the territory is not collected by my own countrymen, they exercise a considerable control. Again, he was certain, that few noble families are extant; and those a prey to poverty and insignificance. If, up to the present moment, he was convinced so much had been achieved, what must he not imagine the future would overturn?

I could observe my host walking to and fro, under the sheltering roof, at a short distance on the opposite side, whence his adherents had hastened to obey his summons. His gesture, manner, and gait, all indicated the highly excited state of feeling our conversation, in its results, had engendered. What else could I conjecture had caused so much uneasiness? At last, spreading his small carpet, upon which he placed his saddle as a pillow, he lay himself

down, and courted the soothing oblivion of repose, to calm the turbulent and unhappy state of his mind.

The tempest now began to moderate ; and although my impatience for the burst of morning, when I must renew my laborious journey, was rendered more acute from the weariness of my present situation, I yet managed to keep the blaze within sight ; and to watch, applying due replenishments of wood, and other fuel, as consumption demanded. At length, the continued rumbling of the chuckee, a household grinding stone, accompanied with the female's song, who thus early toiled for the family comfort, sufficed to lessen my anxiety. The cock crew again and again ; whilst the more distant ones, in answering to the first challenger, seemed like following echoes. Such sounds as these, buoyed up my wearied spirits. The day, at length, broke ; and light gradually diffused itself throughout the building. The village soon began to awaken once more to life and industry ; the daily toil was diligently commenced ; and cattle from all quarters, from the inside of houses, as well as from the enclosures

of courtyards, sought the accustomed place of herding, around and about the well and banyan tree, waiting to be driven forth to pasture.

If the most trivial acts of mutual kindness deserve to be rewarded with a corresponding sense of gratitude on the part of the person obliged, what did not the stranger deserve of me? He had befriended me under circumstances, when, to have refused his aid, was to withdraw all hope from me. It was, therefore, necessary to disburthen my mind, that I should acquaint him with my sentiments towards him, and tender my warmest acknowledgments; but when I reached the spot, where he lay, locked in sleep, after a short deliberation I turned, and left without accosting him; for, to have awakened him from the pillow of repose, would have been a poor compensation to make, for the essential comforts his generosity had gifted me with.

The guide which my obsequious friend the Brahmin had prepared for me on the preceding evening, accompanied my horsekeeper, who led my horse to the entrance of the Durrumsollah—I mounted and set forward on my intended

route. The morning, somewhat advanced, was still cool and pleasant, whilst the fresh wind which blew from the south-western quarter, drove before it, heavy hanging vapours and dark laden clouds, which hitherto had continued to obscure the rising sun. All the small rivulets and nullahs were swollen into roaring torrents, the ground was saturated with water, and the roads broken and heavy. After a ride of a few miles, I approached the river Mhye. The nearer I gained it, the more distinct became the sound of the waters embodied in the numerous nullahs, rushing on in haste to contribute their streams to the accumulating depth of this noble river. At length I reached the accustomed ford in this quarter of the province, and although a distant one to that on the main road, it was generally esteemed more secure, as the bed of the river being wider here than elsewhere, lessened the rapidity of the stream. The crossing was subject to more delay, but less fatigue, than if I had gained the spot whence my baggage, I yet hoped, had been ferried across, if the cattle could not wade through.

I gazed with wonder and surprize on the scene

before me. No longer was the Mhye slumbering in its bed; no longer was it (as in the hot season most rivers subside into in India) a quiet placid stream, tracking its way through the widely expanding sand around; now washing the bank on either side, or now meandering in the midst of its bed's breadth, irrigating the melon fields cultivated on the water's edge; but, in lieu, a mighty expanse of water, white with foam, and tinged with a sandy hue. Onwards it hurried with incredible velocity, burying all other sounds of animated nature, in its roaring violence. The former rippling surface now glistened with angry waves, whilst eddies and whirlpools revelled in the midst. Uptorn trees and weeds, and drowning cattle, overtaken in its fury, floated past, unable to contend against the violent current, now buried in a rapid, now tossed about in a whirlpool, and now gently agitated by the wave, as borne round the base of a projecting headland, they entered the small creek it harboured with its sheltering shoulder, throwing the furious bursting of the waters to a distance. The bank I now stood upon, was precipitous; that opposed to me, rose in a gentle undulation,

now almost buried from the view. Such was the state of the river Mhye as it lay spread from bank to bank before my gaze; a proof of the wonderful changes these rivers, in tropical climates, undergo. It wanted now but little more depth added to it, and the country must be inundated; whereas, before, it scarcely sufficed for the purposes of irrigation, the wants of man, and of the animal creation.

The ford at which I was now halted, was one of very minor importance, and generally used by the cultivator, as the means of visiting the pasture and arable lands upon the opposite side. There was, consequently, no accommodations for the transport of a traveller's baggage, or the housing of himself, to be met with. As for a boat, doubtless half the inhabitants of the miserable village, the left hand of the prospect disclosed, had never seen such a thing. Many had not even heard of it, so very much do the natives confine themselves at home, and their knowledge to the most limited circle of observation. The beasts of the field are only known to them, in proportion as their haunts being discovered, they are taken; the birds of the air are alike un-

known to them by name or general character; the trees in the immediate vicinity, comprise the whole of their botanical knowledge; whilst all herbs, as yet undiscovered to be nutritious and of use to man, are wholly disregarded, and thus an end to all further elucidation or extended knowledge, is at once put. Their geography extends only in proportion, as, driven from distant lands, they may be forced to pass over countries to avoid the severities of famine, and thus they see a little of the surface of the globe; otherwise, if not thus unceremoniously disturbed, or banished from their former homes by war, or the avarice of collectors, their birth and death would only be distant, as regards situation, a few hundred yards, at most. And, in like manner, except those upon the main roads, the nearest village is often unknown to them, and the traveller experiences every difficulty in gaining any information he may require. Such, however deplorable a picture, is nevertheless a true one, of the state of ignorance existing throughout the most retired, and least frequented provinces of Guzerat. How much might not education effect here? and can it be supposed that, with all the

zeal and enthusiasm the world could afford, to effect the conversion of such ignorant souls, it would be advisable to attempt it, before the effects of such utter darkness should be removed, to enable them to see the light which shone before them. They might be taught to call upon the sacred name of Jesus Christ, but of what avail would it be, when the morality of the gospel, the mercy of our Creator, and the blessed example of our Mediator, would be beyond their comprehension, and past their power of imitation.—In the absence of any means for my passage over the foaming surface of the waters which interposed between me and my destination, my only hope was to dismount, and patiently await the river subsiding. A small pagoda lay to the right, enshrouded with trees, which, offering me more acceptable accommodation than the exposed situation I had made my observations from, attracted my attention. At this I alighted, and pondered over, with anxiety, all the by-gone events, from none of which the slightest ray of hope could be elicited, as few servants can be depended upon, and if mine had not used all possible expedition, doubt-

less they mingled a like feeling with mine, and were resting lower down, on the same side as myself. If so, my passage over would only again remove me from my baggage, yet I had determined on the measure, and was not a likely person to disappoint myself in altering my plans.

I had scarcely been sufficiently delayed to become an impatient, when the approaching tramp of a horse on a sudden, stole gently upon my hearing. Casting a glance in the direction of the road I had only a short time before traversed, a group of persons presented itself emerging from a darkly shaded lane. The foremost figure had a loose dark green mantle thrown over his head and shoulders, besides the greater part of his face being hidden in a coloured wrapper. Above his turban, the spiral top of a Surat-made parti-coloured conical cap made its appearance, and there the mighty bulk he presented, terminated in a point, from a gradual slope, commencing from the heels of the feet, and continuing to diminish upwards. He was mounted upon a well but gaudily-caparisoned horse, of tall stature, and strong formed sinewy limbs. A menial grasped the horse's many-coloured tail with his

left hand, to help him on, and enable him to keep up with the shuffling amble of his master's animal, whilst with his right, he held a large chittree,* covered with red cloth, and fringed with gold and silk, over his master's head, to protect him from a slight shower then falling. Immediately in the rear, two armed attendants followed, one bearing a spear and sword, and the other, a matchlock, with lighted fuse affixed to the stock, doubtless alarmed for their safety, in these predatory regions.

Conceiving from the adoption of the insignia of the umbrella, only permitted to the higher ranks of Mahommedan states, or of other sovereignties throughout India, that some person of consequence, doubtless a vassal, minister, or officer of His Highness the Guickwar's, was approaching, I drew nearer to obtain a view of his features, if possible, and feed my curiosity. When yet a few paces distant from him, I recognized the old Mussulman in whose company I had passed a part of the preceding night, and who had befriended me at the last halt I had made. "Ulhum

* *Chittree*.—Umbrella.

dulillah,"* ejaculated the old man, as he returned my salaam. "What, again detained, friend, your stars are unpropitious, and you surely travel under great disadvantages. You see, here I am again, as much refreshed as if this was the first day's journey from my beloved home. What an unfortunate you are, indeed, always separated from your luggage, your bedding, and your servants, yet you seem to hold out well, too. In truth, if you only travelled like myself, under the auspices of poverty, you could never become separated; I allude to your person and your valuables, for when mounted, I have every thing tied upon my saddle. My pipe put inside my Tobra† for my horse, hangs at the bow; the head and heel ropes dangle from the rear part, hanging on either side, whilst I am seated upon my bedding, which only consists of a carpet. Khoda Kurreem,"‡ he ejaculated, before I could answer his raillery. "Khoda Kurreem, if your servants have urged your baggage cattle to the other side of the river

* *Ulhum dulillah*.—God be praised.

† *Tobra*.—Grain bag.

‡ *Khoda Kurreem*.—God is merciful.

before it had sufficiently swollen to impede their progress, you are utterly hopeless, for this is no regular ferry, only a dry season communication with the opposite country, destitute of all accommodation, by means of which a gentleman of your rank might pass over in safety."

"It can scarcely be called a ferry," I replied, "or if it is, what would it signify to give a name so little in accordance with the prospect before us. As for swimming my horse across, I fear it is impracticable; and how long the waters will require to recede, God only knows, and I suppose my patience must testify to."

"God forbid," added the Mahomedan to my reply, "for surely it must be already exhausted, or you are possessed of the wisdom of a sage, and can combat misfortune with perseverance, and overcome its severity with complacency."

"I do not boast altogether of possessing these virtues, from which the essence of happiness might be extracted, but at all events, my friend," said I, "it is possible for me to disarm adversity of the advantages of its worst and most formidable weapons of attack, by assuming, on my part, the

shield of fortitude, and turning, on all occasions, bad into the best that possibly can be made of it."

"Thus far you are right," said my companion, "this is a lesson a soldier much needs to acquire to perfect him in his profession, and the sooner learnt the better. It would appear you act up to your theory, for I see your horse at the pagoda door, and I could perceive you stealing out to look at the poor figure I presented on my approach. If you deign to permit your slave to mingle his foot-marks with the happy impressions of those of one he so much esteems as your lordship, he will enter the dwelling, easing his horse of a weighty burthen, and himself of the cramp."

Onwards we went in company, and on foot, although I endeavoured to persuade him not to dismount. His customs had impressed him with an idea that civility demanded his so doing, and his own pride forbade his acting at variance with what he conceived they dictated. After our entrance into the smoke-blackened interior of this religious edifice, in which the smell of oil was almost "strong unto sickness," the time passed on in desultory conversation. The presence of a

companion, in all the vicissitudes of life, is an agreeable acquisition. If pleasure rule throughout the day, who will deny that it is enhanced by having another to impart your feelings to; and if adversity overtake you, a friend or companion can often alter the circumstances of your case by personal exertion, or ameliorate the trying time by persuasion, and the exercise of mental faculty in argument.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RIVER STILL CONTINUES ITS VIOLENCE—EXPE-
DIENT FOR CROSSING—CROSS—CRITICAL SITUATION
OF THE MAHOMMEDAN—BELIEF IN FATALITY—
REACH MY BAGGAGE—CONTRAST—ILLUSTRATION
OF THE STATE OF THIS PORTION OF THE COUNTRY
—THE DEXTERITY OF THIEVES IN A STORY.

MID-DAY passed on, and still the river Mhye offered, in its violence, an almost impassable obstacle to our farther progress. A few hundred yards in width, and extremely deep, its current yet continued in the centre as rapid as before, although from the water-mark apparent on the opposite bank, I conjectured the stream was beginning to subside. Yet so very slow was the change in our favour, that our hope, now raised for a moment or two, was again extinguished, after a prolonged gaze at those indications, we

were inclined to judge favourably of. Impatience at last fixed my resolution to attempt the passage over by swimming on horseback. I communicated my determination to the stranger, who suggested the adoption of another method, by which he argued we might partake of the danger, and the advantages it offered, mutually. Upon explanation, however, it appeared doubtful, whether his substitute was by any means more eligible or more safe, than the adventure I had formed in idea.

“ Let us,” said the old man, “ collect some of the villagers, for which purpose I will despatch my followers, and obtain from them a cot, to which we must affix a number of earthen water vessels. We can thus construct a kind of raft, I have seen oftentimes used with perfect safety. Shall your slave prepare one?”

“ By all means, friend,” I exclaimed. “ Any thing you wish ; let us not delay. The evening will soon set in, for the afternoon is fast passing away, and I should prefer the assistance of broad daylight on this occasion. An expedient of this sort must not be trifled with, and although I do not wish to reject it, I should still desire to do all in my power to aid its success.”

Considerable delay attended the progress of the intended raft. When all the necessary apparatus had been collected from different quarters of the village, the cot from the house of one more luxuriously inclined than his neighbour, and pieces of grass and cotton rope, wherever they could be found, had been pressed into the service, and the new earthen vessels purchased, the task of uniting them, so as to form this simple machine, in a manner likely to prove useful, yet caused more trouble than could have been anticipated. So much dispute arose amongst those employed; such angry dialogue and abuse attended the direction, where each aimed at supremacy, and none listened to the advice given by all, or any party, as I thought, threatened to frustrate our intentions. In fine I quitted the scene, and regained the pagoda, quite confident it never would be finished, or that if it was, it would be useless.

An universal shout of applause from the quarter I had quitted the artificers at, was the first intelligence I received of the success which attended their endeavours. Many now hastened towards me, to report, that the raft was floating upon the surface of the waters, and those destined to help it across by swimming, in

readiness. Down I hastened to the point, whence this imprudent attempt was to be made. The Mahommedan declared it to be as safe a method of crossing, as if we were ascending a hill upon an elephant; whose great sagacity, on such occasions, baffles all description. Others exultingly exclaimed, as they moved the raft along the edge of the water, "Saheb beitho," or, sit down upon it, Sir. "Hum beithengey," we will sit down, and accompanying the word with the action, they did so. Others were for reward, and whilst their eyes sparkled with delight, their confidence of obtaining it, after their cleverness, was equally apparent. The village children were in raptures, and each door of the houses opening in our direction, was crowded with females, to see the Saheb cross.

Numerous as were the various feelings displayed, I entertained but one, that of mistrust unmingled with delight. The idea of trusting myself to such a fragile support, amidst the foaming current hurrying on before me, when any one of the numerous logs of wood which floated on the surface, would, if it came in contact with us, break the vessels which alone upheld us, was as

far removed from prudence, as the act would be devoid of precaution. Rashness alone could form a pretext for so doing. The villagers observing my indecision, said they would cross first, and accordingly they did so, and returned without danger. It was impossible now to delay any longer, and therefore the raft was ordered to be taken down to a suitable creek, where I could embark without getting wet, and was there to be joined by the Mahommedan, who, be it said to his credit, was less scrupulous than I was.

“Come, Saheb,” said the old man, “what does it signify. If fate has decreed us a watery grave, you may depend upon it we shall have to abide by our lot, whichever way we may endeavour to cross. So we may as well face the danger at once. What say you? But secure your hat, Sir, as I am securing my turban, or the wind will blow it off, perhaps, and with such a current as this, we shall never recover it.”

“Why, my friend,” I rejoined, “all this is true, but as I do not entertain the same feelings as yourself upon this point, you can, perhaps, see some reason in my hesitating. But as we must go, had you not better take off your cummer-

band, as I am doing with my coat and boots. These are serious impediments when every exertion is requisite to escape from a watery grave, which may yet be our case. I shall soon be ready to start."

"Ulhumdulillah," said the Mahommedan, laughing. "If we get upset, which may Allah forbid, your advice may prove of some use; here, Merwan Khan, see this shawl is not injured, and guard the gentleman's things; for, recollect, a piece of dookur, or wild hog," and he spit as he mentioned the abomination, "would not escape the rapacity of these Bheels. Khoda Kurreem, I am ready, but wait a moment, here comes a man with a bundle of gourds, a far better method, and more safe for our transport. Here, Itherow, come here. Buckshish Payengah, you will receive reward."

Reward! electricity itself is not more instantaneous in its effects upon the body, than this sweet sound in the ear of a native. Down went the gourds from off the gardener's head, and were transported to the water, and I must own, I gazed upon this floating throne with far more comfortable feelings, than those with which I had con-

templated the idea of trusting myself upon the bedstead. The gourds were fastened together, in form, a diamond, and secured with rope network, consequently not so liable to be spun round by the violence of the current. It was also easier for the swimmers, of whom there were eight, to tow it; four in front, with ropes round their arms, and two upon either side. But only one could start at a time, an almost insurmountable difficulty. I offered the preference to the Mahomedan, for etiquette is every thing with such persons as my companion; but no, he would not accept it; and yet to be left behind, would lower him in the eyes of his followers, and that would not do; consequently, he, upon his invention, and myself seated upon my throne, both started at the same moment, silencing all unpleasant feelings, and leaving our ultimate landing, whether first or last, or at the same moment, in the hands of fate.

If there is any person who may at Newmarket have felt perfect confidence in such a matter of chance as horse-racing, reading these lines, let him only describe, by memory, his own feelings, as to the horse he has laid his bets upon, answer-

ing his wishes, and he will save me the trouble of relating how certain I was of infringing upon politeness on this occasion, and reaching the opposite shore first. The immense velocity of the current as we proceeded, with the sun playing upon its angry surface, heightened in brilliancy by the white foam around my throne, made me fearful of dropping off from giddiness. I now shut my eyes, but when again I opened them, judge of my transport; the men who before were toiling to their utmost to keep us in our course, were now dragging me towards the shore, having regained their depth. "The land! the land! Hurrah, my boys." "Shabash," I exclaimed, "where is my companion." "About half way over," was the reply. "They have no strength, those half-starved villagers; they do not belong to *Wussadaree*, which is about two miles hence." This was accompanied with shouts of laughter.

I was carried ashore, and turned to gaze upon the floating bedstead, which yet remained a prey to the impetuosity of the current in the centre of the stream. Drifting without help from the united efforts of those destined to tow it across,

it soon floated past the point the Mahommedan had seen me land at. At this critical moment, a log of wood struck against the bedstead, and destroyed the earthen vessels upon one side, which instantly caused it to lop-side considerably, and soon one portion of it was immersed in the water. Although so perfectly reconciled before to a fate which he had had little reason to anticipate, the Mahommedan now shewed evident symptoms of a disrelish for his situation. He roared forth promises of reward, curses, and vengeance; now called upon God for help, now seizing his saddle-furniture, which he was anxious to preserve, and now laying hold of the tottering bedstead, as uneven a surface to rest upon, as unsteady in the water. "Saheb, Saheb, hum Kea Kurengey, Sir, Sir, what shall I do," burst upon my hearing. "throw a rope, bring assistance:" there, again, "I am drowning. Oh God! Oh God! Pull, swim, tug, do all in your power, you rascals, now for the point, once past that, and all is over."

One of the men, facing the current, let the sunken side of the bedstead rest upon his back, and by his efforts somewhat decreased the very rapid rate the Mahommedan darted past at, and

which kept me upon the trot on the bank to keep up with him. At length they reached a spot, where the waters washed the bank of a precipitous headland, and they were carried with the greatest force, within arm's length of the shore, impracticable for landing in this part. One of the natives immediately snatched at a large, and luckily firmly rooted, bush, and brought this unsafe raft to a momentary stand-still.

“ I would sooner,” roared the Mahommedan, “ have trusted myself in this river, holding by a buffalo's tail, or the sacred bull to Mahadeva, than have allowed myself to have been seated upon this cursed machine.—You were wise, Saheb,—hold tight, you rascal, by the bush, or your father shall be burnt alive,—not to trust yourself with me, and if I had not been so scrupulous, like yourself I might have landed in fit condition, whereas now, I am wet through, and my saddle furniture, (God forgive me for eating so much vexation through my own obstinacy,) is totally spoiled. What an unpleasant ride I shall have of it, truly.”

I now lowered a rope to him, which a native had procured from one of the neighbouring hamlets or huts, round a well, and having towed them

round the front of the headland, received my late host with every demonstration of regret for his misfortune. However, after all, it turned out not so bad as he expected. The under portions of his saddle, which presented the formidable heap, I have already described it as, alone were wetted, and his own garments really but little injured.

“By the mercy of God,” he exclaimed, in his loquacity, “I am safely out of it, Sir. It was not written in my fate that I was to die thus ingloriously, and in this I always put my faith. It eases the mind, Sir, in a moment of anxiety.”

“Not much, my friend,” I remarked, “if I may judge by your conduct, as I lately saw it. You appeared pretty eager to control your fate, or at all events, to oppose it, when you saw every chance of its proving unfavourable in the end.”

“So I did, I must confess: who would not? We all know destiny is over-powerful, and believe in it as sincerely as possible, but when the scymetar of a foe flashes above the head of one of our blessed persuasion, who would not interpose his shield to ward off the intended mischief.”

In the mean time our horses had been com-

pelled to swim across, whilst our horse-keepers clung with their hands to the mane and tail, taking care to keep the heads of their animals above water, and towards the current, to prevent making lee way. In a few minutes they joined us, and our party being assembled, each took what refreshment his stores advanced, myself in a pull at my brandy bottle, and puff from my cigar, the Mahommedan, in a little spice and pan leaf; his retainers and my horsekeepers, in a small portion of tobacco, which the natives of India, generally speaking, are much in the habit of using.

At last we moved forward at a sharp canter, until the main road, for which we were searching, sent its echoes to our horses' tramps into the far distant glens. The jests of the old Mahommedan's attendants seemed little the worse for constant repetition; neither did it appear that the wetting they had gone through, nor their hunger, in any wise interfered with their mirth, or made those severe inroads upon their usually giddy dispositions, which the latter had upon mine. Continuing to put my horse's mettle to the test, I was in hopes of throwing the Ma-

hommedan in the rear; as he was, it appeared, rather soured in his present humour, and presented one of those many striking instances of persons which our daily intercourse with the world developes, with whom theory better accords than practice; in fine, who preach, but do not perform. The usual travelling pace of a native seldom exceeds a walk, or, at most, a sharp amble; and the time they will remain upon horseback is equally astonishing with the dull progress they can accommodate themselves to. Heedless whether or not they relished the severe work I indulged in, for any thing is preferable to the walk of an Arab, who is remarkable for tripping, I continued to urge my beast to his utmost. Nevertheless, I found it impossible to shake off my companions, as they were constantly at my heels, whether I accelerated my rate of going along or not.

Hailing a batch of wandering pilgrims we chanced to meet, I received, in return to my inquiries, the pleasing intelligence, that my servants and baggage were at the village which lay in the distance before us, and on which a dense fog, having scarcely cleared the surface

of the earth, now rested. These are very numerous, and more or less locally attached to certain spots which retain the water in the rainy season, and are peculiarly unhealthy. The evening had now closed in, when the neigh of my second-rate favourite, Irakee, welcomed me with a kick at my burthened charger, as I rode past his pickets, keeping in rear of his heels.

The place at which I now alighted, and where my servants had arrived the evening before, was far more comfortable than the one which the frowns of fortune had driven me to seek an asylum in. Having at length divested myself of my uncomfortable clothing, and done ample justice to the repast I found prepared, I was once more agreeably metamorphosed. After a draught or two of genuine Hodgson, my wonted spirits returned, and with each succeeding glass of Port, taken in tumblers, I drowned my misfortunes yet deeper and deeper in oblivion. Thanks to my speed, for ere half an hour had elapsed, and my dinner was finished, the rain began to descend again more steadily, perhaps, but equally heavy with that of the preceding evening.

The Mahommedan had, in the meantime, both

cooked and partaken of his frugal repast, said his evening prayers, performed his ablutions, and now, quietly seated on his small carpet, was enjoying his hookah. The natives of India will sit for hours together, partaking of a pipe, without any companion, and seemingly gazing upon vacuity, neither thoughtful, nor alive to the scenes before them, as if employment was neither a portion of their duty, nor necessary towards their maintenance. This species of determined idlers, may be seen, at all times of the day, squatted upon their hams at the threshold of the door of their houses, or upon the stone steps leading up to the verandah, without appearing to court pleasure, or even bestowing a smile of approbation upon the feats of a juggler, or the amusing gambols of the children playing in the adjoining road. The usual provocatives to mirth and laughter, are with them of no avail ; and on what their thoughts can be bent, I have often endeavoured, although in vain, to elicit. It is this feeling which causes them to disbelieve the assertions of a traveller, as to knowledge being the object of his voluntary exile from his home and family ; and having no energy themselves,

they can only ascribe to a love of gain that ambition for fame, which my countrymen are willing to relinquish every happiness to obtain.

Unlike the European, he was associating with, the Mahommedan had no necessity whatever for vinous liquors or burning spirits to uphold him against fatigue. Accustomed, from early life, to a cup of water, it sufficed to refresh him, and he took it with a greater relish upon trying occasions, from a conscious feeling of rectitude, in abstaining from such indulgences, as would render him less worthy of being ranked amongst the true believers.

My orders for an immediate march were now completed. Each servant was aware how much responsibility I attached to his performances, and knew full well what he would receive as the fruits of disobedience or inactivity. As I returned from inspecting my horse's comforts, and superintending his grooming, the Mahommedan, perceiving me at leisure, accosted me, and requested permission to remain in company the next march.

“Indeed, I may add, Saheb,” he continued, “as far as the city of Ahmedabad, should your

route lay in that direction, for really I am afraid, almost, ever to trust myself with the luxury of repose, as nothing can exceed the expertness of the thieves of these villages. I know them well, experience and cost have imprinted a lasting remembrance of them upon my mind. I never shall forget an occurrence that happened to me not far hence. I was then in command of a body of freebooters, whose chief had a fortress, far removed inland, and built upon the banks of the Sabermuttie. A rich Banyan, whose unremitting thirst for gain, had enabled him to accumulate lacks of rupees, went on a journey to perform Pooja, at a pagoda, situated in the Jungles, towards Amednuggur to the eastward of our present situation. Several reverses had much reduced the finances of my master, and the wealthy Hindoo was too good a booty not to arouse his cupidity. I was young in these days, comparatively speaking, and the mere interchange of cuts with an enemy had charms I never could resist. Our intended prey was as cunning as rich, and had employed, as a guard, about thirty hirelings, to whom he paid a high price, to ensure his safety by their fidelity. One

by one, as pay became scarce amongst us, and our numbers denied to us the acquisition of any considerable booty,) our followers fell off and deserted, and it was at this particular juncture, that religious enthusiasm coaxed the old fox from his den, to become a prey to the wolf. As the party intended for this service was intrusted to my charge, I took good care to make myself acquainted with the route he intended to follow upon his return, and accordingly choose an eligible spot for an ambuscade. I was not altogether satisfied with the competency of the means I was possessed of for the attack, yet I was resolved to make the attempt at all hazards. Once or twice I mingled with his camp, either as a Gosayen or fakcer, and have received from his own hands a few pice or a measure of grain in return for my demands. Having gone through the most dangerous portions of the country, without molestation, (for I myself forced one or two bands of robbers, unable to cope with mine, to relinquish their intentions towards his party) his guard became inattentive to their duty, and on one march, even neglected to have their matchlock fuses lighted. Allowing them on this occasion to es-

cape, the nearer they approached the main road of communication through Guzerat, the more they abandoned all necessary precaution.

“I still continued to hover about their line of march, and had the satisfaction of beholding the whole party hastening on, heedless and careless, towards the ambuscade in which my party was posted. Many of their soldiers had tarried behind at the last village, listening to the tales of a Calundar,* in which disguise I had placed one of my comrades, to try his success in withdrawing some portion of the followers attached to old Banyan Jee. Every thing prospered. They halted for a short time at a well, where I had another man, roasting Cabobs,† to tempt such Mahommedans as were in his pay to relinquish him. The capital manner in which this fellow played his part astonished me. Many were their pressing exhortations to make haste, many the

* *Calundar*.—Wanderers who gain a livelihood by telling stories. See *Keppel's Journey through Syria, &c.*

† *Cabobs* are pieces of meat and vegetables placed alternately and fastened on a skewer, sometimes roasted, and sometimes immersed in curried gravy.

curses hurled at him, and yet, although one of the most irascible creatures in the creation, he bore with the latter and evaded the former. Now sharpened his knife, and then suspended its operations to ask a question of them, or tell them a jest, until the Banyan would no longer be delayed, and started. "Wait but a moment," said the Cabob roaster, "and you shall have them at half price, for I have been uncommonly lazy, or the fuel is wet, otherwise, I can assure you, no man is more expeditious than myself. By-the-by, you may have heard of the renowned Cazy Abdool,* at Ahmedabad; he was passing here, and gave me unbounded encomiums, and you know to please his palate is no easy task. Ya illah il Ullah,* I have cut my finger," he exclaimed, and extending his arm suddenly, as if from pain, he overthrew a water vessel over a portion of the fire. Thus delay followed upon delay, until I clapped my heels to my horse's sides, joined my party, and awaited anxiously the coming of the prey.

* *Cazy*.—A judge amongst the Mahommedans.

† *Ya illah il Ullah*.—Oh God.

“ My view was very much circumscribed, and bounded on all sides with jungle. The most distant portion of the road I could command a sight of, terminated in an angular turning, round which, ere long, I had the pleasure to see Banyan Jee, first and foremost, mounted upon a horse, I had long sighed to obtain, wind slowly past; then came three or four bullocks, laden with tentage, escorted by the heedless soldiery, and unwary servants who accompanied him; next came two Rhuts covered with crimson curtains, followed by a host of armed retainers, by whom weapons were rather esteemed as ornaments than likely to be justly made use of. In numbers, the cavalcade, as it passed us, was decidedly superior to my party. Their utility and daring we soon put to the test. Ulhum-dulillah and our heels soon brought us to their rear, and those nearest were either prostrated by the charge, or sent to gaze on other worlds by our swords. Consternation reigned every where, flight, not fighting, occupied those who ought to have been our antagonists; so that deserted by all on whom he had placed dependance, the unwieldy Banyan, in his despair, dropt alarmed from his horse, and was heard loudly

supplicating for his life. His wealth he readily discovered, and we took his women along with us, as well as himself, until his Ghorawallah* should return with a ransom of six thousand rupees. At first we demanded ten, but by the oath of the cow, and the neck of his father, he swore he had not more than six in the world. "Then be it six," I replied, "and quickly paid, or else even your carcass shall not have the rights of burning, for in these inhospitable forests you shall be left a prey for the beasts of the field and fowls of the air."

"Having at length started his menial, he mounted my horse, whilst I took possession of his. A sharp watch was kept upon him lest he should attempt escape, and his arms pinioned. In the course of time, having collected all our booty, we set forward towards the strong-hold, my master, a Grasia, possessed, to account for a portion of the spoil. As we neared a collection of grass huts in the centre of an almost unfrequented forest, except by those whose livelihood depended upon plunder, we perceived the inhabitants,

* *Ghorawallah*.—Horsekeeper.

dreading the approach of our armed party, decamping in all directions. We beckoned them to return, but where can the guilty conscience place any confidence? No, they remained aloof, and we bivouacked for the night, pitched the Banyan's tentage, and gave scope to mirth and merriment at his expense. Imprudently, a division of that portion of the gain we intended solely for ourselves was here made, and doubtless we were watched, for some how or other, whether from our own negligence or their astonishing dexterity, the major part was gone in the morning. Many mutually suspected each other, and now and then an angry cut threatened to divide their heads as well as their friendship. This led to a general inspection of our kit and bedding. I now examined his saddle and clothing, and he in return ransacked mine; nevertheless, it was impossible to ascribe to any others than those, who in their pretended fear on our approach had flattered us with the certainty of safety, the guilty theft; doubtless their flight was intended for no other purpose than that of silencing our scruples, and persuading us to pitch our camp within the limits of their dexterous power."

CHAPTER VIII.

A REQUEST GRANTED FROM CERTAIN REASONS—ILLUSTRATION OF THE CHARACTER OF INDIAN GOVERNMENTS AND SUBJECTS—SCENERY—REFLECTIONS—PRESENT STATE OF THE INDIAN ENUMERATED—DESCRIPTION OF THE ADJACENT COUNTRY BY THE MAHOMMEDAN—HIS INTENTIONS.

“WITH the knowledge of having been thus outwitted by the inhabitants of this portion of the country, I am always suspicious : now the presence of your guard, Saheb, for I have observed your sentries always on the alert, will at once secure me from falling a victim to their mercenary pursuits, whilst your condescension will obtain for me the permission of basking in the pleasure of your society.”

No proposition ever came home so completely to my wishes as this one. “Granted, friend,

granted," I replied, " but recollect, you must do your duty in adding to our amusement, for I see you are well acquainted with all sorts of life."

Having bid him take the rest he required, under all the blessings confidence might bestow, in freedom from anxiety, after having first placed his saddle under the charge of the sentry—duly enumerated to him, and displayed the various articles it contained, I took my leave, threw myself into my arm-chair, and began to indulge my reflections, for read I could not, having no light left me, through the negligence of my servant. The proposal of the stranger I was inclined to view in the most favourable light. It might, I considered, enable me to collect from him without appearing to have such an object in view—much anecdote and historical fact regarding his ancestors, besides serving as a palliative to the ennui of a long and solitary march. With these advantages I might also obtain some clue, which, when pursued with an unbiassed judgment, might discover a basis upon which to found an admiration of the character of his countrymen, or from which to point with justice the finger of scorn and detestation. As yet the knowledge of the

minor traits of the Indian disposition, and their domestic conduct, is but imperfectly disseminated; so that historical fact stands forth in its most appalling form with few, if any, circumstances offered for the consideration of the reader, which might be able to divest a scene of bloodshed of its most uncompromising appearances.

A thorough acquaintance with the manners of the age, necessities of the government, constitution of society, and disposition of the subject, must necessarily be attained to before an accurate or sound idea can be formed of the nature of these aggressions upon private security. Such has not as yet been developed to the view, or even sought after by those who are loudest in ascribing the basest principles of the human mind to the Mahomedan natives of India and elsewhere. There are those who would deny to them the possession of any of the better feelings the human breast can foster, forgetting that the human disposition in all countries is the same, unless altered by the effects of education, and improved upon by the example of morality. Much more than we are generally inclined to give them credit for, do they deserve our admiration; and if they fall

short of ourselves on the score of humanity, have they had the opportunity of attaining the summit we have reached. Let those who have already learnt to gloss over their own deviation from the fidelity they have pledged to those who have confided in them, and who have abandoned steady principles in their ambitious course after greatness, granting to those injured the insulting excuse, that an unflinching necessity has urged them so to do, pause and put the actions of those they condemn to the same test they wish to be judged by. If they would but duly weigh all the circumstances of time, situation, and custom, attendant upon what they deem atrocities of an appalling nature, they might yet learn to grant to others that indulgence they would claim gladly in their own behalf.

Even the most inhuman action is surely entitled to be justly judged of. Examine such in this manner, and I can indulge with confidence an assurance, that few, if any, ought to feel surprised, should they find in a community where life itself was wholly insecure from the machinations of private individuals as well as from the despotism of the constituted authorities

of eastern monarchies, that deeds of revengeful hate, bitter jealousies, and personal aggrandisement, obtained by fair or foul means, as opportunity offered, should form conspicuous traits of character, and stain the public page of history, with the disclosure of the foulest crimes. Observe the day in which these occurrences have their origin, mark the degraded state of society, without a patriot to assist at the helm of state, without a minister who dared to oppose the absolute will of the Shahan Shah, or king of kings; whose pleasure, if it inclined to tyranny, was to tread down his unfortunate subjects with unrelenting fury, sparing neither age, sex, or childhood, from the general execution; and can it be a matter of wonder, that kings should have been murdered; that the keen knife of rancorous hate should have been deep stained with the crimson gore of ministers exalted from eunuchs; of sensualists adopted from the dregs of the community, to aid the monarch in human destruction, and to crush, by force of arms, the feeble efforts of an oppressed people, already driven to desperation.

What monarch, I would ask, could ever have inflicted upon his unoffending people, a severer

punishment, or heavier curse, than the monarch Mahomed Toghlucluck Shah before alluded to. To gratify merely a whim, he ordered the imperial residence to be changed from Delhi to Golcondah ; and in the edict announcing his intentions to the inhabitants of Delhi, he ordered them to abandon this revered spot. It was at once to become tenantless ; the place of birth, so universally beloved, in whatever climate or country, was to be deserted by the emperor's subjects ; not because pestilence had fixed its abode there, or that it was threatened with the horrors of a siege, but solely to gratify the vanity, ambition, or pleasure of an individual. The mother was to remove from within her home, and lose sight of the Kubberistan, in which lay the respected remains of her husband, or her long-lost child, though yet living in her memory, as fondly dear as ever. No longer could she indulge her feelings in scattering roses and other flowers over the tomb. No ! the lamp she had with every evening's twilight lit there, was to be extinguished, and soon all traces of whom the mortal was, who had been there consigned to rest, she knew would be lost. Thus, on the one hand, was her

grief certain, but what fate yet awaited her, in trials and misfortunes upon the road, she had in bitter uncertainty only to conjecture. Her family married, and living in the adjacent provinces, were now to be so far removed, that the hope she had entertained of having her death-scene softened by their presence, must be lost to her for ever. She would no longer be enabled to visit the tomb of her favourite Peer,* endeared to her from the fond recollections attached to its precincts; no longer could she make her offerings there, or be present at the annual festival, appointed to ensure the lasting fame of him who was beloved on earth, and she doubtless now imagined in the enjoyment of those rewards the hereafter had in store for the religious. The favourite mosque†, where she could indulge a prayer of thanksgiving to her God, or ask for his protection from impending danger, where her footsteps had so often borne her, was now to be distanced from her for ever. The spot where she had last parted with him, in whom

* *Peer*—Saint.

† *Mosque*, place of Mahomedan worship.

the sovereign had ever found a faithful servant, and who had sealed his fidelity with the blood of her son, was likewise to be abandoned. The place where his footsteps had, in their eager haste to follow that fate allotted the youthful warrior, left her in the agonies of grief, poignant and bitter to the recollection, yet sacred in her memory ; and where shē could, when her inclination wished it, repair, to image to herself his countenance, warmed with enthusiasm, whilst the tear bedimmed his eye, as he was turning away, was alike to be forbidden her.

In an equal degree, in being thus banished, was misery depicted to the mind of him who could, in returning from his ablutions, daily bring to his recollection the shouts of the victorious army he was present in, when it passed under the arched gateway, which his way leads under, crowned with success, and welcomed into the sacred city with every joy. Although no longer able to fight in the cause of his countrymen, he yet gloried in the boast of having done so, and what could be dearer to him than to mingle with his former companions, or linger on amidst those scenes, best able to throw back

the reflected image of days and circumstances, long since past, upon his notice. And then, again, what was the severity of his case, whose approaching nuptials must be delayed, and an arduous journey performed, and a home established, before this ceremony could be completed. Must it not forcibly occur to him, that disease and danger might impede his wishes for ever, or that the bandit might seize upon his beloved, and bear her from his sight, or that, in the confusion and hurry of the removal, a thousand ills might befall her. To what source could he look for comfort? A distant land, far from the scenes in which he had spent his boyhood, and in which no comforts equal to those he left behind him, could be reasonably anticipated, was not the soil in which to cultivate the growth of patience. And even if once pleased with the new scenes he had encountered almost insurmountable difficulties to reach, might he not, if the present moment was to decide, be again banished from them.

If such was his case, we will pass on to that of the merchant. After years devoted to experience, he had perhaps, at last, discovered in

whom he could repose confidence. From these he was to be removed. The goods he had embarked in speculations with each caravan, as it left Delhi, must now be lost; for who could he believe would be so honest, on their return, as to search for him, the monarch's will had taken away from their sight. No; he knew human nature, as he had always viewed it, was not very likely to furnish examples of disinterested individuals, who would, from a love of justice alone, undertake to discover those to whom they were indebted, and whose enormous gains had placed a sum of money in their power, capable of rendering themselves rich, and reducing their scrupulous delicacy. To think was but to despair.

The old, respected in their immediate neighbourhoods, and surrounded by those endeared from long acquaintance, could not regard the sultan's firman* without shuddering. Crippled with infirmity, they were unable to seek for pleasure at a distance, and had, doubtless, centered all their happiness in lingering now here, now there, returning the salaam aleikum to

* *Firman*.—Order.

those of their acquaintance, whom chance directed within the very limited wanderings they could accomplish : and these once separated, how were they to spend the short remainder of their lives? They must abandon, together with the antiquated door-keeper of the serai, their accustomed situations, to seek a foreign portion of the monarch's kingdom, where to live could only be regarded as a curse. The pedagogue saw his school at once broken up, and his scholars dispersed in all directions, like a flock scared at the appearance of the tiger. The Brahmin now must relinquish his favourite idol, shadowed under the pagoda of which every stone and image was dear to him : and so on through every grade of society, too numerous to remark upon ; for each, individually, felt proportionably the vengeance which accompanied the accomplishment of this arbitrary despot's pleasure. It would almost appear incredible that any one could have voluntarily relinquished such a residence as the palace of the Shah, in Delhi, from the terrace of which he could gaze upon the most strikingly beautiful city in the world ; but yet it was so : and history gives the result in one broad assertion, " it

proved the loss of many thousands of lives," and gave rise to every species of misery the mind and body of man can ever have to contend against.

Such was Toghluck Shah's will. Whether prosperity was to attend it, it signified not: it was to be done. Nowhere from the constitution of the realm was the man or minister to be found, who dared to oppose such an iniquitous resolution, although his own fate was involved in the general ruin? The Centre of the Universe* had said it should be so, and could brook neither disappointment, nor the semblance of opposition. He had ignited the firebrand of devastation, and of all the sufferers who dared raise his arm to extinguish it? Such was the monarch, in many instances, towards his people. Severity was in his deeds; and he often extended the sceptre of injustice to gratify himself.

But yet, a few words may be urged in behalf of those who stole a feverish repose, and reclined upon the musnud.† Let justice ask, was their's a life of honour, undisturbed, or of blissful se-

* A title assumed by these monarchs.

† *Musnud*.—Throne.

curity. No; far from it! The free use of money bestowed in bribes, to corrupt the fidelity of some amongst the numerous servants; the disaffection of the nobles; the strength and violence of party feeling; the murmurs of the populace; required all the vigilance of human foresight to circumvent, and counteract the baneful consequences usually accompanying such a distracted organization as that of their immense empires. Gold could procure the highest honours; intrigue outstrip merit; cunning outvie caution; and an assassin was ever prompt and ready to accept the seductive influence of an advantageous offer. These were the disadvantages under which the monarch laboured. Many who sat upon the throne of the Moghuls, had been immured in state dungeons, removed from society; their only solace a licentious mode of life for many years before they obtained their distinguished rank. Uneducated, unrestrained in their passions, ignorant of the social duties of human life, they were hurried, with headlong precipitancy, by an infuriated and successful party, from the horrors of the dungeon, the stupifying madness of continued confinement, to become the leader of the people, and ascend the throne.

The way before them lay through scenes of bloodshed. An action without the walls of Delhi, confusion in the streets, massacre in the palace, and deposition of the former King's favourites, were augmented by confiscation of property, banishment of nobles, exile of families, and, in fine, every mental and corporeal misery, even trampling to death with elephants, accompanied the elevation, and first met the eye of the monarch; to which, precarious as was his own situation, the king was forced to assent. Severity was the first result of power; human blood was freely spilt; and unless the almost untutored mind could rise superior to apparent necessity, how constituted must that monarch be, who was enabled to avoid assuming the character of a tyrant.

Who can deny, that when once the mind becomes sufficiently enervated to suppress the tear of sympathy at another's woes—to stifle the justly indignant reproach that can often paralyze the arm of oppression—to behold, with complacency, the accumulated horrors of individuals doomed to death, and their innocent relatives also brought within the pale of punishment—that but a short stage remains in the path of life,

to lead this human being to inflict upon others what, but a short time before, he witnessed the infliction of. An eastern monarch, in many instances, became a tyrant from necessity, rather than from a naturally cruel disposition. He saw bloodshed without repining in the first instance ; habit familiarized it, as a proper sacrifice which necessity demanded ; and he soon became, from the example set by his predecessors before him, and the manner in which he was thus associated with scenes of bloodshed and murder, a principal actor in such dreadful tragedies. Extreme severity of punishment, aided with a multitude of armed followers, was all the monarch was possessed of, to awe treason with. In consequence, force, in this kingdom, was constrained to usurp justice, lest the assassin might become daring upon the appearance of indifference, and apparent neglect of precaution. The rapid succession of extortion and violence which finally characterized the conduct of a sultan who conceived himself firmly seated upon his throne, aroused, at last, indignation in the minds of the people ; who sought, eventually, the life of the offender, as an expiation of his cruel tyrannies. Such was

Delhi; such the state of the imperial authority; and such the situation of the inhabitants!

But to my tale: fatigue and toil had often, during my residence in India, fallen to my lot before. A day's hard shooting, a harassing march, or long absence on horseback after the wild hog, are everyday occurrences in a subaltern's life, but then these situations, although arduous in themselves, had always duty or sport to render them less so. But what interest could a night's forced vigil, or a day spent partly in the rain and sun, and partly in an oil-smoked pagoda on the banks of a river, accompanied with fasting, afford to ameliorate the time? I cannot now trace to my recollection any situation that had engendered so much suffering, as the late one; however, it was amply compensated by the additional pleasure with which it made me contemplate the prospect of repose, and which doubtless would give it proportionate zest.

The dawn had scarcely once more broken, ere I was on the road again, accompanied by the stranger and his adherents. My eyes were feasted with delight as each new scene presented itself to my gaze. The luxurious state of the rapid vegetation which even a few hours rain in the tropics

can command ; the highly cultivated state of the country, and the pleasantly green aspect of the whole range under view, heightened in effect by the bright and glossy foliage of this thickly wooded and romantic land, was quite enchanting. I felt more than ordinarily exhilarated in spirits. The first burst of rain engenders a feeling of renovation in the minds of those who sojourn in an Eastern clime, which baffles description. I became so completely engrossed in studying the beauties around me, and feasting upon the feelings awakened in my mind, that I entirely overlooked the idea of being in company with others.

Many a long year had passed away in rapid succession since I bade farewell to England, my home, my friends, and native country. As yet, the pleasing and rapturous feelings of warm affection for the scenes of my youth, were not obliterated ; and when in pressing forward, I beheld many a spot strongly delineative of the scenery of those far distant shores, how was it possible to estrange myself for a moment, from those thoughts, that stole with bewitching influence over my mind, and pourtrayed in the vivid colouring of imagination, a mother's tenderest care, and

brother's unfeigned affection, which rose uppermost in my memory.

I had not exchanged a word with my fellow-traveller—how was it possible : an exile from the scene of my fondest recollections, the slightest semblance, or the most simple approximation to them, was sufficient to awaken thoughts too numerous, and too delightful in their indulgence, to allow of any interruption.

We had now arrived at a sloping defile, which led to the ford of a considerable stream. As we gradually descended, the banks, which were quite perpendicular, rather, perhaps, bending their summits beyond the projection of their bases, threatened to overwhelm us with some detached portion of their indented and broken sides. The murmur of the waters as it passed by us, perhaps heightened in its effect by our enclosed situation, was highly pleasing ; the birds chirping upon the branches of the overhanging shrubs, anxiously watching our nearer approach, that they might hurry onwards, until another branch or decayed shrub, shooting across the chasm, offered a suitable perch for them, seemed to be designed to guide us to the ford. In fine, such was the

happy disposition of the moment, that little, if any thing, escaped my notice. My wandering eye brought almost the whole of the varied landscape, in its minutest beauties, before my gaze, because the emotions of anxiety were absent from my mind. It was for once unoccupied. The scene was placid and serene; the bowl of pleasure was filled with every rational and desirable ingredient, to make its draught delicious, and nature was the source from which such were obtained. Nor halls of feasting, nor bacchanalian mirth, nor midnight revels, aided with song and dance, presented themselves for my contemplation, or lent my mind amusement as easily effaced, as momentarily enjoyed. No, it returned upon itself, and there found the true and only fountain from which real happiness can flow. Let that but answer the necessities of the moment, whether they demand a companion in the desert, or a friend in the busy world; and soon those trifling and artificial means, often sought to soothe our sorrows, and hurry into oblivion, by tumult and boisterous mirth, the aches and agonies of our mortal career, will be relinquished.

Having once more regained the level country,

two roads opening in almost opposite directions presented themselves. Uncertain which to follow, and having no guide in advance, I now recollected my companions. I had to halt for a few minutes to allow the Mahommedan to come up with me, who, from deference and respect had kept his horse some paces in the rear, and, doubtless, had been refreshing himself with a partial ablution in the stream, whilst he allowed his animal to slake his thirst. A sense of my incivility towards him burst full upon me, and the politeness of his manner, as he answered my questions, was proportionably embarrassing.

Having returned him a salaam, for an Englishman in India must conform a little to the manners and customs of the country, an explanation, on my part, ensued. I described the feelings, so awakened, as to engross my undivided attention to themselves, and the scene which had given birth to them. "When home, with all its train of pleasing reminiscences, when boyhood, in all its force of youthful pleasures and pastimes," I added, "bursts with uncontrollable violence upon an exile, how can he arrest his ideas for an instant to reflect upon propriety. If

you have felt my unconscious inattention, for a moment banish it from your thoughts, and accept my embarrassment as a token of how sincerely I regret that I cannot offer you any more appropriate apology."

"Saheb, is men Kea Shukhy,"* was the reply. "How can your slave do otherwise than accept your acknowledgments, as politely offered, as unnecessary upon this occasion. Besides, I can most fully mingle mine with your feelings. What can exceed the veneration attached to the place of birth, excepting that entertained for one religiously sacred! Doubtless you may find something to admire in the country, that thus recalls the fondest recollections human nature can cherish, unconnected, as it must be in your case, with any unpleasant memorials of the past. An exile you are, indeed, Sir, but only for a time; and if the possibility of revisiting your home should not come within your power, yet a lingering hope remains to you, that never expiring ember in the breast of man, which, whether now

* *Saheb, is men Kea Shuklhy.*—What doubt is there in this, Sir?

fanned into a flame by prosperity, or depressed into a mere spark from despair, yet continues to exist within us, whilst the breath of life remains in our charge. Mine, however, is a case of helplessness; nothing appears to brighten up the future prospect; and the past was once too happy, not to add embitterments to an already broken mind, if recalled. You are a temporary exile, youthful, with the world, and perhaps long life before you; I am a man of years, father of a family destitute of employment, as well as myself. When I gaze upon my children, in lieu of reaping every delight from indulging my feelings, I cannot but anticipate that they are doomed to see the total overthrow of Mahommedan power in India. Nay! may even outlive its almost definite existence. Banished I have been, these last thirty years, from what was once the spot where then my parents lived on in ease, although not aspiring to affluence. But where is that paternal roof, now that the mouldering bones of my father and mother have doubtless lost their shape in decay, hastening to mingle together, more closely united, in the dust of the grave? where, may the mercy of God preserve them

from being disturbed. Where, I would ask, can I seek for it? Can it be found, when, alas! it has been scattered around, plundered and devastated by the arm of oppression? The power of the Mahrattas! a mere atom at first, but founded upon the wreck of our greatness, in the end, it became like the mountain torrent, too strong and potent to be resisted. It has wrested all from me and my posterity. And, again, where am I now to seek my asylum? As fast as I have been established in one city, near the chief under whose banners I was serving, the English, in reducing him to obedience, have heaped upon me poverty, in the disbanding of his followers, and crushed our occupations alike with our power. Now here, now there, I must brave the storm of affliction, and be indebted to those to close my eyes upon this world, whose very birth is a curse to them, and who, if I should preserve a peaceful and happy look, when a cold and stiffened corpse before them, must envy the lot of him they sorrow at losing. Moreover, what can I bequeath my children, now, the name, the simple name, yet a blessed one, of Mahommedan, without any portion of the splendour of their forefathers; nay

more, without sufficient wealth to raise them above the pitiless situation of poverty. Such has been, and such is, my friend."

"You have, indeed, much reason to complain," I replied. "Life, when considered in such a light, can allow of little, if any enjoyment. Yet to repine is fruitless. One blest retreat, the solace of your childhood, has been torn from you, but is there no happiness to be found? Surrounded by your family, your children, and your wives, what spot can be without its interests? Can water in the desert, be more acceptable to the traveller, I would ask? Can the slaughter of the foe, be more pleasing to the soldier? or can the attainment of the throne, be more gratifying to the ambitious, than the fond gaze of the parent upon his family, must ever be to his mind? The fond solace of your khanums—the endearing attentions of your offspring—to act as guardian to their tender years, and drink the sherbet of delight in the disclosure of their manhood, may well serve as pastimes, until the hand of death calls you to futurity; and why brood over ills, which the foresight and consideration of those who rule over this country may yet avert. The prospect is a poor

one at the present moment, but it must improve again before long, I should imagine."

"If you assert it," rejoined the Mahomedan, "it is too welcome a piece of intelligence to my mind not to believe it, Sir. What you have stated, has had its due influence in convincing me. I ought to esteem myself happy. But there are times when my views extend further than the present moment, and forbid my indulging such an idea. A progeny is always accounted with our sect, the greatest of all blessings, and the star of destiny may then be considered to shine with the most powerful indication of prosperity. In it I have obtained the consummation of my fondest hopes, but the affection of a parent makes life itself a sting, a very curse, when it presents no manner of employment for the head of a family, whereby, in signalizing himself, he can earn for his children the enjoyment of sufficient riches, and lead them, before his death, to that distinguished rank in society, his merits cannot otherwise obtain for them, paving the way to their future greatness. When once the ladder is placed against the wall, who ought not to ascend to the very summit of the edifice?"

Our conversation here terminated; and we continued our march, wrapt in silent admiration of the country we were traversing. The Mahomedan, each time as I turned to gaze upon him, for again he had fallen into the rear, appeared deeply engrossed with his own thoughts. A sullen, apathetic listlessness, at times clouded his brow, heightened with an expression of chagrin and disgust. Half-suppressed sighs, mingled with ejaculations of "Khoda kurreem," and "Allah akbar," involuntarily escaped him, seconded, now and then, with abusive epithets. At length, suddenly directing my attention to a shaded retreat amongst lofty and high grown tamarind-trees, in the centre of which a small stuccoed dome glistened, tinged with the earliest rays of the morning's sun, he observed to me—"that, Saheb, was the western boundary of my late father's Innaum Jageer,* inherited from my great grandfather, to whom, and his descendants, it was by grant, given in perpetuity. Some few coss to the eastward, lies a small village, the annual collec-

* *Innaum Jageer*.—A grant of land given as a present, sometimes in perpetuity.

tions from which were also included for faithful services; and in this place I was given to my parents as their first-born son. Beneath a well-spread banyan tree, the pride and ornament of our small court-yard in former days, the remains of my father and mother, I have been led to understand, lie interred. As yet, an old friend has informed me, the spot is unmarked by the erection of any monument to their memory, and this deficiency has been the chief object of my anxiety for some time past. On my return from Ahmedabad, I shall erect a tomb there. This duty, combined with the desire of revisiting a spot lost to me for the last thirty years, has of late exercised such control over my feelings, that however reluctant I have been to see the destruction of my late father's property, I have at last consented, and this is the first glimpse of it that has come within my view. The parting of the roads, which for a moment embarrassed you, skirted the southernmost point of land he possessed, and the one we left upon our right diverges after a short distance, but little, to the direct eastward, and passes by the boundary in that direction, leading, after two hours' march, to the village I have mentioned."

“Then I suppose we shall not have occasion,” I remarked, “to pass through, or perhaps, not even nearer than we now are, to the village to which you have drawn my attention. Yet, if you are anxious to proceed there, I can have no objection to accompany you, as I am fond of shooting, which is always to be obtained in plenty, around those spots most removed from the main roads; and besides, I have been so expeditious in marching, that I can claim a day or two to myself, which I shall otherwise employ in halting.”

“Your favour is great,” rejoined my companion, “but as there is no immediate occasion for my arrival there, I would rather delay it. The few workmen I shall require, can only be entertained at Ahmedabad, so that we had better pursue our former intended route. Besides, I am unprepared with a Moollah,* under whose direction alone, I can perform the rites necessary to be celebrated, to ensure peace to the departed souls of my ancestors; for without his spiritual aid, I should conceive they would be wanting in efficacy.

* *Moollah*.—A divine,—a Mahommedan doctor of divinity.

The ground over which our horses are now passing, will continue, for some distance, to lead through the centre of my late father's possessions, and I should wish to let the first impulse of my feelings subside a little, ere I regain spots, yet more interesting, where my parent's footmarks were hourly imprinted, and of which the very dust is sacred in my sight, and where their fondest affections were hourly lavished upon me. No, believe me when I state it, that I was just now as totally unconscious of being in your presence, Saheb, as you were before of my following you."

The interested manner in which the stranger had spoken to me, gave additional weight to his arguments. He had discussed his case and the prospects of those of his family, to whom the world was yet but new, with candour and reason. Little does life offer to the Indian of the present hour,—a daily subsistence, with labour and toil, until the hand of death consigns him to rest, is all he can hope to acquire. If overtaken by famine and disease, his own resources can avail him nothing, and were it not for the true affection all branches of one family testify towards each other, in mitigating their misfortunes with sup-

port when wanted, and opening their homes, although scarcely equal to the stature of man in height, already crowded to excess, to the new unfortunate, I know not what would be his lot.

I could fully appreciate the warmth of manner he had displayed; it was the offspring of real affliction. It must have been a sad and sorrowful scene for him to gaze upon. The vast expanse of cultivation under view, as well as such spots in which the lately sown seed was springing up into appearance, bespoke the abundance of that harvest, from which in former days, as yielded by the same land, his father had derived the chief emoluments of his Jageer. Who, let me ask, would not sigh to see such an heritage wrested from his possession? Who would not hasten to obliterate as much as possible from his memory, that such was once intended for his enjoyment by removing to a distance, where he need not behold such blessings placed in the hands of others. At all events, who would linger there until calm reflection had returned after first sight.

CHAPTER IX.

OUR POSITION AFTER A CANTER—DESCRIPTION OF
THE APPROACH TO AHMEDABAD—STATE OF MIND—
WANDER THROUGH THE SHAH BHAG—REFLECTIONS
—A TOUR ABOUT THE CITY—A KUBUR*—PROSPECT
FROM THE TERRACE OF THE SAME.

THE sun had now cast off the veil of clouds which had been floating past since we started, and became excessively annoying. A sharp canter sufficed to bring us to our halt. The stranger's horse, of pure unsullied Kattywar extraction, appeared to dispose of the rider's weight, with comparative ease to himself: Fresh and well fed, he soon displayed, as we proceeded, the fiery nature of his breed; now kicking, and now rearing, striking at me with his paws, or darting at

* *Kubur*.—A tomb.

my horse with open mouth and dilated nostrils. He was a perfect picture, loose limbed and of high action. Yet, although violent in the extreme, he had his match to contend against, and was forced to yield to the prowess of the old man, whose dexterity quite surprised me, encumbered as he was, with a matchlock in one hand, and a large shield, reaching from the back of his head to his waist, besides a sword, passed through his cummerband, and pressing stiffly against his horse's side. It was astonishing how he mastered him. And now but three marches remained ere Ahmedabad would be reached. The third day's journey was nearly half completed, ere any material alteration was distinguishable in the scenery around us. We now began to encounter the merchant, with his stores, to overtake the Brinjarrie*, with his unemployed bullocks, on his road to the vast city, to seek employment, who was again passed by his more lucky clansman, with his beasts, laden to their utmost. The merry sounds of the numerous bells distributed amongst the

* *Brinjarrie*.—A sect of Hindoos, who keep up large droves of cattle for hire.

herd, to keep them together in the night time, mingled with the incessant shouting of the numerous drivers of a lengthened line of carts, and the lowing of the cattle. The fields were studded with human beings at their daily toil—indeed, it seemed as if all were a dream, or may be compared to a sudden change of scene at a theatre. Hitherto we had traversed miles each day without meeting a single individual; but having now passed the spot where the four roads leading to a distance from this once mighty metropolis, were centered in one broad one, we saw all the busy activity, and eager haste, which characterizes an approach towards the main focus of business, and attraction. The remaining distance as we continued to traverse it, was over a road formed chiefly of fragments of decayed masonry, and which led through the former suburbs of the city, now a continuation of fields under cultivation, and which presented a bright and sparkling surface of a whitish hue, from the quantity of mortar intermixed with the soil. Again these patches of culture bore a rough appearance from the innumerable fragments of burnt bricks and uplifted portions of foundation work disturbed

by the plough. Ever and anon, an archway, proof against the effects of weather, and the assaults of time and mankind, stood a solitary remembrance of the Mehellah, or quarter it served as an entrance to, in former days. Again, the partial remains of the base of a pagoda, with its grove of trees adjoining; of which their several trunks remained preserved from injury, by embankments, clearly demonstrated the particular situation of the Hindoo portion of the population. Now again, upon all sides, mosque, shrine, and mausoleum fed the gaze, half hidden in thick clusters of trees; now and then a chunamed terrace, as yet extant, and outliving the general decay, obtruded itself upon my searching eye, followed in rapid succession, by the remnants of aqueducts, piles of architecture, and carved stones strewed in every direction, over the surface of the park-like scenery, peculiar to the plain I was traversing. Again the eye rested in its gaze upon an immense tank, artificially made by embankments, which, from the bottom to the very summit, were adorned with flights of stone steps, alike worthy of remark from the regularity and pleasing slope preserved throughout, as for the

quantity of materials, and the time and labour they must have required to connect them. Ease, affluence, and grandeur, were the concomitant associations raised in my mind. Again, this extensive sheet of water, in the centre of which was an island shadowed with a thickly woven canopy of foliage above it, supported by gigantic trunks of trees, had often echoed to the sounds of woe, and solemn tramp of the funeral processions of the Dutch, who had, of late years, buried their dead in this pleasing and secluded spot, which was approached by a roadway supported on arches, but on which the hand of time had made severe encroachments, and imprinted the pleasing romanticness of ruin.

Such is the approach to Ahmedabad. The wonder excited by such a scene, seldom pauses in its effects, to allow of an enquiry after the former inhabitants, who have left such mighty traces of their splendour for posterity to gaze upon. If it did so, scarcely would a remnant of the former nobility step forward to claim descent from such illustrious ancestry; or if such an individual should exist in the present moment, doubtless he would lead you to a shed, near a well, or offer as

refreshment to the wearied traveller, the water from his bucket. Years of poverty have denied a shadow of their former affluence to the present generation, whilst every necessary clue as to their lineage, has been crushed in the decline of all education. But if the matter were otherwise, what would it avail, to trace what once was in happy prospect before them, and have to sigh at its subversion.

In the midst of a large plain, scarce sufficiently broken to deserve the appellation of undulating country, stands Ahmedabad itself. Its grey walls and upreared battlements, now partly in ruins, and in parts hidden from the spectator, by clusters of trees, spread their length over many a mile, in form an irregular circle, and are no longer kept in good repair; the gateways are really of little, if any protection to the city, as the dilapidated state of the fortifications offer easy access to any foe in the present moment. Around and about, lie fragments of architecture, unroofed sheds, deserted serais, patches of garden ground, and spots overgrown with milk-bush, whilst Peeris' shrines, yet fed by the religious fervour of the Mahomedans, with such gifts as they can bestow, live

on in a better state of repair, and, possessing some portion of the beautiful appearance, their erection was intended to display. Daily falling off, as these props are, ruin yet threatens further to invade this varied and imposing scene.

The mind goes on sympathizing with the desolation delineated in these ruins, until it again finds a relief in the busy appearance of the crowded bazaar, and apparent prosperity from contrast, with the sketch just completed, of the present city, which is but a reflected shadow of the ancient capital of Guzerat. But if we stop and draw a comparison between Ahmedabad, at this moment, and as it stood formerly, the busy din of industry, or the noisy bustle of a passing marriage, will not suppress the astonishment kindled at the recollection of the splendour it so rapidly attained to, and which is only surpassed by the astonishing manner in which it is falling into decay. The mind cannot turn from the contemplation of its present insignificance, when the traces of how far its habitations have once spread over the adjoining country, are yet fresh in the recollection. Passing the ancient college, where ascetics and students alike mingled together in former days,

like the debtor and culprit in the present jail it is converted into, and turning to the right after passing under the Teen Durwazeh,* we made our way to, and alighted at the Shah Bhag, or royal gardens. These are about a mile distant from the Delhi Durwazah of the city, which opens on towards the road which led in the direction of my destination upon our western frontier, at its most distant point Deesa. A traveller in India should always pitch upon that side and extremity of a walled city, from which the communication with his next march branches off, otherwise he may be constrained to make a circuit of considerable length to gain it, as the impertinence and obstinacy of all doorkeepers of fortresses is proverbial, and nothing can soften their obduracy. At Cambay, I once had my servants separated from me from sunset until the morning, and I was forced to relinquish my intention of sailing that night, because the Durwan had once closed the doors, and swore he had not got the keys in

* *Teen Durwazeh*, or three gates.—These are three connected arches, over which is a guard room, or suite of apartments, so that they entirely reach across the main street.

his custody. It was about eleven o'clock, when having made the purchases I had desired them, they presented themselves at the gate, on their return to the sea beach, and were refused permission to pass.

My morning's ride had been longer than usual, from the delay occasioned by visiting some particularly interesting objects which struck my fancy, and lay in the vicinity of the road we had approached the city by. Although the morning's sun had risen with uncommon warmth, the scene was too gratifying to be galloped over. The great difference between this one and my former marches, replete as it was with interest and excitement, made me disregard the heat altogether. I sat down to breakfast, oppressed in mind, burthened with anxiety, and in a highly contemplative mood—the ruins I had beheld, the romance I attached to them, had gained an ascendancy over my feelings, too great for general levity to dissipate.

From the room in which I was seated, and of which no living mortal was a constant tenant, or there performed the rights of hospitality in the character of host, I could discern the broad river Saburmuttie, tracking its way in silvery white-

ness, between its banks, and distant a little beyond the pleasingly green carpet, the tops of the plantain trees, just sufficiently high to attain to the parapet of the terrace around, spread before me, as if to lure me to tread upon their frail and deceitful surface, in order to attain a nearer glimpse of the stream. I wished each stone, each building, tree, door, and gateway, or other inanimate thing, had a tongue to tell of days gone by, or that the murmurs of the living waters, borne on the wings of the breeze which brought them to my hearing, the bulk of history; and such, I feel convinced, must be the impression of wonder and surprise, left upon the mind of any person who makes a first visit to Ahmedabad, passing over the same tract of country as I did on this occasion.

I tried to forget what I had observed—argued the absurdity of allowing such headway to feelings arising from an undue indulgence of curiosity, but the task could not be completed. I endeavoured to read, but found myself too restless to pay attention. I thought of shooting, but the mid-day sun was too hot. Then what was to be done, unless the time could be sauntered away in a ramble through the sheltered grounds adjoining,

whose paths were so many avenues of beautiful trees, shaded, in many parts, even from the meridian sunshine. This was, at length, adopted, whilst my thoughts were busied in picturing, in the most lively colouring, all that my excited fancy conjured the phantoms of. My imagination was all alert: in every shaded retreat and group of bushes—in every ruinous mass of masonry, I read nothing but delight.

Here it was then, I imagined to myself, that sultans, surrounded with power and clad in majesty, at whose very nod even life fled as chaff before the wind, whose will and its execution, was alike instantaneous, had often tasted the evening breeze; and here, again, the ladies of the royal Zenanah, were doubtless allowed, when the crowd around the royal person had dispersed, or been forbidden to bend even their gaze in a certain direction, to indulge themselves in a short ramble, not altogether private, from the incessant guard preserved over them by their husband, in the establishment of watchful eunuchs; and yet I could not but suppose, that often had the drooping plantain tree canopied a stolen interview with man, when, to gaze in the

same direction as her footsteps led her, was at the penalty of his death. Could I forget that human nature cannot be controled by absolute force. Could I believe that ingenuity, when at the instance of love, will not outvie precaution. Could the fear of death be supposed to awe him who had seen his betrothed bride stolen by a satrap's minion from her home, and who, he was certain tarried yet within the precincts of this royal garden. No! I could entertain no such belief; and my wandering thoughts pictured the culprit on her knees, asking pardon of a sultan, whose heart had never known the love for her, her pinioned lover had entertained towards her, for him she adored, and who now, in the sight of the executioner, awaited his approaching fate with stern resolution. Again, they reverted to the cold and stiffened corpse, or strangled, or cut with knives and hacked with scymetars, she had presented on the following morning, when, before day-break, they bore her down the steps to the water's edge and cast her into the deep. Yes, in these gardens, by moonlight, either accompanied by their female attendants, or stealing onwards with fear and trembling, they enjoyed a partial respite

from the monotony of their savage secrecy behind the screen, and saw nature in its least sophisticated moments, the time of night.

I knew for certain it had been so, and not many years since, but time had changed the scene. The boisterous mirth of revelry and midnight feasting, had quitted these gardens—the resplendent illuminations, which had rendered every leaf upon the top of the tamarind tree, or those scattered on the ground, perceptible, were extinguished, and now no longer did the mansion ring with the dulcet voices of the celebrated courtezans of the capital, whose numbers and vocal power, aided by the music of many instruments, were almost overpowering to those who witnessed the nautch and heard the song. No longer was the bewitching hour of midnight robbed, by these bacchanalian pleasure sounds, of its sacred stillness; all was silent as the grave. Again, the owl, perched on the peelow, or scared from the banyan tree, could be heard aloud, and received his benediction from the traveller whose repose he disturbed.

Ahmedabad was now governed by the English. A collectorate had usurped the court of vice-

royalty, once established there, and afterwards converted by stratagem and treason by the servant of the legitimate throne of Delhi, into the royalty of a monarchy. The thousands of irregular troops, who before could scarcely restrain the turbulence of the mob in this metropolis, or protect the royal person from the danger of assassination, had dwindled away ; a small band, say five hundred disciplined sepoys, and a few irregular horsemen attached to the judicial authority, were all the troops now stationed in this large city, to aid the arm of justice, and protect the public, as well as private property. Disorder and riot had nevertheless quitted the public bazaars, a due control had been established, a good police watched over the interests of those, whom daily toil had rendered weary, and even the most unfrequented quarters of the province were, comparatively speaking, safe. Pomp, pride, and vanity, had alike subsided.

As I wandered on through the Shah Bhag, it was impossible to abstain from admiring the rich and various crops nurtured by irrigation, as they waved in graceful undulations around, yielding to the influence of the breeze. And here, again,

all was changed; the hand of improvement had, amongst these spots, been active in the extreme. The full laden ears of grain were the portion of industrious poverty. These same grounds, which before only fed the luxurious appetites of kings and potentates, now yielded sustenance to the needy.

Such changes as these, would on most occasions, yield an ample harvest of delight to an enlightened mind after due contemplation. But mine was, at this moment, moulded in a different form, too strongly contaminated with the ideas of powerful monarchs and imperial ministers, to glean a happy contrast midst cultivation, and silent, uncommanding industry. Variety was wanting; the main objects of equeries and military followers, were deficient in the scene before me. It was not a soul-stirring scene; but one more fit for the cool calculator, than the military youth. As an officer, it was only in gazing on an encampment, or thousands of warriors, with all the concomitant busy activity throughout, that I was to be awakened into rapture. I wanted "the pomp and circumstance of war," and could have echoed to the tumultuous roar of thousands of Mahom-

medans, starting for enterprise, even when conscious that their way to renown lay through torrents of human blood. Such were my feelings, under the excitement occasioned by fancied theories of splendour and magnificence, which agitated my breast. What pleasure could be derived from the distant lowing of the wearied oxen at the well, and harsh discordant sounds of the irritated husbandmen urging them to perform their daily toil which now alone fell upon my nearing.

Still wrapt in thought I wandered on, when chance, rather than intention, guided me in my return to the palace. Although my excited mind had as yet reaped nothing but disappointment, acute in proportion as the airy flight of my conjectures outstepped the reality, it was far from being subdued in tone. The same anxiety prevailed, the same desire to unravel the maze of mystery in which my chief object, a knowledge of what had been, was encompassed. Eagerly searching for my companion, he was discovered near a small ruin, converted into a resting place for fakeers and travellers, situated on the banks of the river. His carpet was here

spread, and, in the midst of his prayers, he was just rising from a prostration. A sight so unexpected, so little according with the fancied theories of my overburthened thoughts, recalled me to myself. Beneath a lofty tamarind tree, that hid even the rays of the tropical sun from the gaze, and shed a shade, as beauteous to behold as delightful to repose under, I seated myself upon a fragment of the time-strewed masonry around, and watched him with keen observation. The folded hands—the constant prostrations—the apparent, if not absolute fervour of his prayers, uttered in a low murmur, excited my admiration. Oh, that I could have read the inward workings of this follower of Mahomed, and have searched him in these moments of his humiliation. Could he be soliciting pardon for his sins, or merely reciting enjoined portions of the koran, and adhering to outward forms, on which to rest an hope of an hereafter; or could worldly enjoyment be the object of such devotedness? Again I was on the rack of unrestrained and unsatisfied curiosity; and, of course, destined to become the victim of disappointment. Having at length completed,

he arose, folded up his carpet, gave it in charge to his servant, and resumed his direction homewards. Eager to gain some information regarding the ruinous outskirts of the town, I purposely intercepted him; and he finally agreed to accompany me the next morning, in the character of a guide, to what he considered the most highly interesting spots in the immediate vicinity.

From the time of our first becoming acquainted, I daily formed a higher opinion of my companion, who helped many an idle hour away with some anecdote, which, however trifling, lost nothing of its interest with me. With such an opportunity before me, enabled to glean what information I required, in company with a more than ordinarily clever native, whose language I could fully understand, every hour after our interview became more tardy, and the night was consummated with unusual restlessness. The time of appointment came, at length; and where is the lover, who could more anxiously await the coming of his beloved, than I watched for the arrival of the Mahommedan, who, at length, came hastily down the avenue of trees, which over-shadowed the main road leading to the building.

Assembling my moonshee*, and a few domestics to carry my chair, gun, and breakfast, I joined him without delay. Thus furnished, I could make a long day of it, and such was my intention.

A low, ill-constructed arched gateway, in no-wise corresponding with the elegant grandeur and noble extent of the gardens to which it forms an entrance, echoed to our horses' tramp, as we passed under it. Taking a westerly direction, along the banks of the Sabermuttie, which washes the city walls for a long extent, Deria Khan's tomb first came within view. The only reason I have for particularizing it is, because it far exceeds in bulk and size the other buildings around the city. It is a massive pile of masonry, without a single beam in its whole construction. Little, if any taste is diffused throughout; still, the grandeur of the conception, and amazing quantity of materials used in its erection, cannot fail to excite the surprise of the beholder. The accuracy with which each stone is fitted, so as to require little, if any cement, to form a lasting and firm basis for the

* *Moonshee*.—Tutor, in the native language.

noble dome to rest upon, displays at once the correct principles of design, and mastery of execution. If the riches or prosperity of a nation can be estimated by the buildings erected by individuals, either as monuments in memory of the deceased, or as private residences, such stupendous fabrics as adorn the adjacent country, and exist throughout the city of Ahmedabad, would be apt to lead a spectator far beyond the reach of probability, perhaps, in judging of the splendour the followers of Islamism attained to in this quarter of the world. Such a criterion, in the present instance, I should be sorry to adopt ; still I can affirm, that an impression is left on my mind, that a state of affluence has once existed amongst the inhabitants of this country, which our having become rulers of, has destroyed the utter hope of ever being regained within a century. The deplorable want of a circulating medium, and all high offices being filled by foreigners, reduces the people annually to greater despair of ever again emerging from the state of poverty they are now suffering from ; their wealth having been drained from their country, and the inhabitants, no longer the rulers of kingdoms, or the

courtiers around a throne, have greatly diminished the inland traffic of the country which then demanded articles of show and luxurious costliness.

But let me avoid digression. One step more, and perchance I may lose my depth. To proceed. Various and gratifying patches of scenery, stately edifices and ruins, were in turn visited. Again, neatly executed and elegantly carved sarcophagi, shadowed under a dome of stucco, which rested upon arches filled up with light screen work, cut in stone, and oftentimes in marble, claimed a portion of our admiration. The pattern, delineated on each square of stone or marble which the screen-work comprised, was different, but the execution invariably neat and well designed. Plain, unadorned mosques, musjids, and shrines, alone remarkable for the sanctity attached to them, now met the eye; whilst, in every direction, the feet passed over or trod upon upturn graves, and crumbling walls. The day was cloudy, and my strength kept pace with my determination to visit such places as might enable me to extract, from the materials before me, some conjecture of the magnificence of ages past, although portrayed in the melancholy, yet pleasingly soothing appearance of ruin and decay.

Wandering on, we came to a sequestered spot, verging on the precipitous bank of the river on which side the city is built. Here it was high time I should rest awhile, and take some refreshment. At the further end of a circular tope of mangoe trees there stood a small *kubur*,* plain in appearance, and built of stone. A portion of the south-western wall was dilapidated, and many a crevice opened in this part of the building, in which small plants had taken root, spreading a few green leaves to the balmy influence of the air. Yet even these looked sad and sickly. The arched roof supported a chunamed terraced walk, in the centre of which a polished dome, just sufficiently lofty to out-top the highest trees, rested on its base. So silent, so still, so hushed was all around, it seemed to fix a more imposing solemnity to the spot, solely than that of marking the place where the Moslem lay, to whose memory it was sacred. An abundance of weeds grew around it, nurtured by the shade of the trees; whilst their undisturbed growth clearly indicated it was seldom, if ever, visited.

* *Kubur*.—A tomb.

There was a calm silence reigning around, in perfect unison with the fancied loneliness and undisturbed quiet of that repose death calls the mortal to. It awakened a lively interest in my mind to gain, if possible, some clue regarding the tenant of this tomb. Without effecting this, I felt convinced I should feel dissatisfied with my day's labours. My moonshee was accordingly directed to be unremitting in his endeavours to discover if any inscription existed about the building which might satisfy my curiosity, and if such good fortune attended his diligent search, to decypher the same, and acquaint me of it. From one corner of the tomb, a low narrow stone staircase, enveloped in a dusky shade, led to the terrace above. This I ascended, and was amply repaid for surmounting the difficulties opposed to my progress, in the ruinous state of the steps and want of light to guide me on: the country, for miles around, stretched on in one highly cultivated champaign scene, where scarcely a perceptible rise disturbed the general level. Immediately to the north, rested the city, clad in its brightest hues. Each house-roof, cleansed with the rain, opposed a sparkling surface of the

deepest red. These, again, were surmounted with glistening domes and milk-white cupolas. The nearest gateway, flanked and enfiladed by two well-built stone towers, massive and perforated with loopholes, as well as defended by an outwork, now partly in ruins, lay only a few paces distant from the stop where the brave and intrepid General Goddard, commanding a small, but daring army of soldiers, had escalated under a galling fire and obstinate resistance. Further in the back ground, my servant directed my attention to a group of tall well-grown tamarind trees, stating that the English burial place lay directly underneath their shade. This spot I afterwards visited; it is, in form, a crescent, skirted by the wall which protects the town from any approach on the river side, and is entered, on either hand, by passing through gateways commanded by towers. Though one is gone into decay, the other is constantly kept in repair, it being considered as one of the main gates of the city. In the midst of several tombs, is one plain in the extreme, with only a small urn on the summit, sacred to the memory of Captain Gough, who lost his life in the gallant storming party, just

at the moment when bravery was rewarded with hard-earned victory. The few words engraven on a marble tablet, suffice to tell the tale of how meritorious a soldier was lost to government on this occasion, and how many a brother officer regretted his untimely death.

Tracking its way to the gulf of Cambay, towards the south-west, flowed the Sabermuttie, presenting, at a short distance, a broad sweeping curve, heightened in its silvery whiteness, by the contrast of the bright green surface of the early herbage which clothed the opposite shelving bank, and which was intersected with the dark outline of numerous ravines. The eastward and southern quarters were studded with piles of noble buildings, whilst, here and there, a stucco dome and sparkling terrace, in which latter, the Moslem at prayer, now standing up with folded arms, and now prostrating himself, was canopied securely from the sun, under groups of the lofty palm tree, and lent a pleasing variety. The foliage and herbage afforded an alternate relief, and when the passing clouds shed their darkening influence over particular spots, the scene became still more varied in its beauty. The destructive influence

of the hot season was arrested, and all nature was clad in its most pleasing attire.

Who, in India, has not gazed upon the rapid return of life in the vegetable kingdom, after the first fall of rain, with wonder and surprise. Where only a few days before, in a morning's ride, you have passed over an apparently barren soil, you now see thousands of plants shooting up, and budding forth into luxurious vegetation. The parched brown and red appearance of the whole country, now gives way to the more pleasing and rich variety of colour the early herbage assumes, adding an additional zest to the pleasure of early rising, alone centered in the hot weather, in the generally received opinion of its being necessary and conducive to health.

CHAPTER X.

A SHOWER—MY MOONSHEE—HIS CONDUCT—SARCO-
PHAGUS' INSCRIPTION—MAHOMMEDAN'S EAGERNESS
—RAGE ON THE PART OF ABDUL FUZL—DISCLO-
SURE—DEPARTURE FROM THE TOMB.

WHILST I remained studying the various beauties of the prospect which presented itself to my view, the clouds gathered around, and the few first drops of the coming shower hastened my departure from the terrace to the inside of the building. These soon increased into a regular sheet of water, which deluged the surface of the country, whilst the absence even of a breeze, led me to expect that some considerable time must elapse ere I could start to regain the palace in the Shah Bhag, full three or four miles distant. As I partook of my refreshment, I observed the moonshee and the Mahommedan, at a short dis-

tance, standing sheltering themselves under the mangoe trees, although they could afford but partial relief or shelter from the inclemency of the storm. A single beckon sufficed to bring them into my presence, when, during the intervals between each draught of smoke from my lighted Manilla cigar, I was enabled to interrogate the moonshee as to what success had crowned his research. This antiquated looking old being, whose youth having been devoted rather too freely to the pleasures of this life, had now given place to premature old age, had been in my service for three or four years, which had exempted him from the necessity of using those verbose compliments and high sounding titles with which an inferior is accustomed to address a superior in India. On all occasions, however, a marked deference was observed on his part towards me, insomuch so, that although there was little remaining for him to teach, and still less necessity for my persevering in my studies, he nevertheless drew a portion of my monthly receipts, and was numbered with my dependants. On this occasion, however, as a stranger was present, and he was unwilling to exhibit his manners in an un-

favourable light before one of his own persuasion, he pressed the palms of his hands together, bent forward with a well-feigned air of supplication, put on an appearance of abject submission, became my slave, and premised his answer to my inquiry, with a flourish of most absurd and ridiculous expressions. I was applauded, by the old dotard, as a light of the universe, protector of the poor, rewarder of merit, acknowledging worth, and diffusing justice, before I had fairly awakened from the surprise this burst of folly had thrown me into. Just as he was about to humble himself with the dust, and liken himself unto ashes, to seek my condescension, and to intercede with the all-merciful Allah in my behalf, I begged him to desist from such absurdities, resume our usual mode of conducting business, forbearing to raise me from my present situation of his master, even in the figurative cream of his expressions.

Thus confined, although somewhat astonished at my feeling offended with his flattery, he acquainted me, “that although always ready in my service, and zealous in the extreme to further my wishes, as a slave ever ought to be, yet he re-

gretted to say, that he must represent "his usual good fortune had deserted him, and that his endeavours to find an inscription had been fruitless,—indeed he was the object of despair."

"This," he observed, pointing to the larger sarcophagus, "is decidedly built over the remains of a man, whilst the other clearly indicates the burial place of a woman. We may conclude they were man and wife, for although the favorites of nobles, and khans in general, (if they survived the fluctuations of their master's fancy, or escaped the machinations an admired beauty in a harem is constantly exposed to, from the envy of her companions) were honoured after their demise with a participation of their lord's mausoleum, this building is of too ordinary an appearance to denote its having belonged to any person of considerable affluence or power. The means of the lower classes of Mahommedans, are so much circumscribed, that a single wife is seldom, if ever exceeded, on account of the great expense attending the marriage ceremonies and subsequent feasting, although polygamy is allowed by our sacred law." This burst of information was concluded with an appropriate glance at the stranger,

for approbation, whilst the moonshee uttered in a firm, steady voice, “such are the blessings allowed to us true believers, my friend.”

“Stay,” interrupted he, after a pause, “these appear to be Persian characters engraven on this marble: to be sure, here is an Alif, preceded too by a Kh-, and doubtless, this is a Noon, which conjointly exemplify Khan.” Interested in the highest degree, I could not forbear interfering, and accordingly, endeavoured to assist; but the confusion created by the fancy of the sculptor, who had indulged it in graceful flourishes, and had removed, or misplaced the dots appropriate to, and characteristic of the several letters, rendered my efforts useless. “These characters,” continued the moonshee, “are so choked up with dust, and the edges of the letters so chipped and disfigured, that I fear nothing satisfactory can be elucidated.”

“Dip some weeds in the reservoir fronting you,” I exclaimed, “for a considerable quantity of water has collected there, and wash away, at all events, the dirt you complain of; for I am determined to decipher every letter, ere I depart, Let me have no delay,—to the task at once.”

The moonshee at first was rather unwilling, but soon reduced to obedience by a significant nod, aided by the Mahommedan, armed each with a brush of wild indigo plant, scrubbed away until the whole sarcophagus bore quite a renovated appearance. This finished, the man of learning proceeded, pointing with a small stick, to draw forth letter after letter, constantly repeating the last one, until the next was satisfactorily made out. After an hour's delay, diligently employed, turning towards me, he observed, "May my sight fail altogether, but in this inscription, I can clearly decipher 'Khan Mahomed Jung, Panch Hazaree,' or may it please you, commander of five thousand horse. This you must observe was a rank obtained from the sovereign by men of valour, and distinguished ability, as a recompense for fidelity, and those on whom the favour of the king descended, were invested with the dignities and emoluments of this command."

The Mahommedan now began to evince an eagerness quite foreign to the generally apathetic disposition of the natives in respect to such an occupation as now diverted our party. He ap-

peared to me to entertain an ardent desire, which he with difficulty suppressed, and endeavoured to keep concealed, to be certain of the purport of the letters, to decipher which, the moonshee's attention was again directed. "It is as I have said," ejaculated the latter, 'Khan Mahommed Jung, Panch Hazaree.' Khoda Kurreem (God is merciful), but here is the date, and it appears in tolerable preservation. "Sunna Hijerah," (blessings on our holy Prophet, from whose flight from persecution the date of this blessed æra originates) Sunna Hijerah Eek Hazar-eek-Sow-our Khea or what. The pair of spectacles, which the infirm state of his sight demanded his wearing, were now taken off, cleansed, and placed again over the bridge of his nose, with every demonstration of the pride, and value, the late fortuitous discovery had given rise to, in his own estimation of his worth and learning.

Again Sunna Hijerah premised the assumption of his task: again and again "eek Sow" was repeated, and once more the word, "our," played upon his tongue, when after an obstinate endeavour, niheen, or nothing succeeded, as, although earnest in his efforts, he could not determine what num-

ber the last stroke of the sculptor's chisel, had traced in outline with the finish of his labours.

Turning towards the other sarcophagus, he tried his eyes and learning in efforts to distinguish what was sculptured upon it, but could only in a very unsatisfactory manner, after much labour and many curses, unravel, Mao, Saheb Bebee. More than this he assured me was inscribed, "but may your slave be pardoned," he exclaimed, "for old age and infirm sight render his endeavours fruitless, where perseverance ought to ensure success."

"Friend," said the Mahommedan, at length, "are you certain that the correct interpretation of what is written on the tombs, is the one you have now given?"

This question acted like an electric shock on my menial. Resuming an exact posture, and glancing an occasional look of inquiry at the astonished stranger, whilst his anger subsided sufficiently to allow of his articulating. "Certain!" he ejaculated in surprise, "What king are you who thus interrogates me? Certain, yes indeed am I more than certain. As I am an unworthy follower of the ever blessed Mahommed, so sure I

am that my eyes cannot have deceived me. What then, this is really good,"—and he burst into laughter. "Do you imagine for a moment, that moonshee Abdul Fuzl, to whom the beauties of the Persian poetry, are as a nosegay to his understanding, can for an instant err in such a trifling matter as putting a few letters together, or cannot distinguish the parts of an alphabet beat into his memory by the severity of Moollah Syed Kurreem, a perfect star in the heavens of knowledge.—What then—I suppose!"

How long the moonshee's wrath might have demanded the exercise of his never-ending powers of eloquence, I cannot determine, but just at this moment, a favourable pause ensued, which the unintentional offender eagerly availed himself of, to obtain a hearing, which he with difficulty effected, for the moonshee no longer able to speak, extended his arms towards the stranger, and clapped his hands, sooner than he would be defeated, adding violent stamping to drown his opponent's voice in his intended reply.

"What has happened, has happened," said he, "and you entirely mistake the reason I had for questioning you. Pardon me: I wish not to doubt

your ability or accuracy on the present occasion, but my feelings demanded that I should not sacrifice them to any, but certain conviction, that the person who here lies interred, is the ever to be respected Khan Mahommed Jung."

Pacing up and down with unsteady steps, the Mahommedan appeared to me to be harrowed up with the keenest anguish. I was quite astonished, yet forebore to question him on the subject, anxiously awaiting for a disclosure of the cause of his apparent unhappy state of mind. Now thoughtful, now deeply agitated, stifling his sighs, and muttering to himself—he was the image of despair. "Khan Mahommed Jung," at length, in a broken voice, escaped him, "but by the curse of Allah the transgressions of my youth, which broke in upon my peace and happiness, are not as yet permitted to be lost in the dark oblivion of time. May Allah be merciful to me! May you, oh injured friend, now rest in peace, but in this name, recalled from the quiet of the grave, a thousand tender associations are involved. To the name of this illustrious family I added a stain, in the abduction of a young female; and now, when my grey hairs, when my beard, whitened by the

blasting effects of years of toil and trouble, reminds me hourly of the more near approach of dissolution, and the fast closing hour of life waits but for the completion of that fate engraven on my forehead, to gather me to my forefathers, my mind is embittered by the recollection of the errors of my youth, thus suddenly recalled from the repose of forgetfulness, which I have sought in prayer and atonement."

I could not help commiserating the condition of my companion. The moonshee alone seemed regardless of his bitter remorse, and stood aloof to feed on the irritation his wounded pride had awakened. Perceiving this, the Mahommedan still urged as an excuse, his never having intended to offend him, but it was of no avail until he seconded his endeavours at a reconciliation, by promising, on the following evening, to disclose to myself and the moonshee, the particulars of the catastrophe, he lived on, ever to regret. "Perhaps," he added, with a sneer, "your suspicions may then be lulled to rest, Moonshee Jee."

Little caring whether he had quieted the enraged impatience of my tutor or not, he

mounted his horse, alike regardless of the inclemency of the weather, and we soon lost all traces of our guide ; nor were we long ere we followed. The day, now far spent, still offered no assurances of its clearing up, we therefore pressed on quickly, and soon dismounted at the Shah Bhag.

THE
MAHOMMEDAN'S STORY.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAHOMMEDAN'S STORY.

Night the First.

THE royal residence at which I had now been resting for a day or two, stands on a small spot of table land, formed by the projection of a portion of the shelving bank of the river Sabermuttie. Up to the general level of the gardens, extends a foundation work, supporting the terrace above, in the centre of which the building itself is raised. The whole of this under-work is arched, and divided into small apartments, for the conveniency of lodging domestics and followers, who are, in Eastern countries, particularly numerous. The house is approached by small stone bridges, thrown across an artificial canal which surrounds the building, and is cut into the terrace. The surface when it was filled with

water, was equal with the floor of the lower rooms. In the centre of this, and arranged at appropriate distances, a number of fountains were, in former days, kept constantly playing, for the purpose of cooling the breeze. These, however, now only present, in some places, pieces of copper pipe, and in others, a small elevation of stucco which surrounded the spot in which they were fixed. When the hot winds were blowing, which in Guzerat are particularly parching, and produce an overpowering lassitude, the spray of the water, borne in the direction of the hall, kept up a moisture pleasing for the eye to rest upon, whilst the murmur of the falling fountains rather courted the reposing monarch to sleep, than disturbed him. The mansion is altogether a noble building, but the centre room alone can claim admiration from its immense size, and neatly executed ceiling of carved stucco work. The whole comprises a square. In the centre is the hall of audience, and at the four sides, octagonal rooms, the uppermost ornamented with balconies, leaving four main entrances between them. There is a first floor, in passing which, up stone staircases, you ascend to the terraced roof above, in

the middle of which an elevation is raised, for the sole use of the royal family, and towards which not one of the many courtiers dared approach without an obeisance. These staircases are covered over with a stone roofing, supported by four arches, opening on the terrace, and, at a distance, much resemble stacks of chimneys. Indeed, the whole appearance from the river side would cheat the spectator into a belief, that he was approaching one of the many beautiful noblemen's seats his native country boasts of. A painted imitation of a Persian rug is the centre ornament of the ceiling of the hall of audience, of which the colours are remarkably brilliant, even at the present moment. In this room I intended to receive my promised guest ; and the assiduity of the moonshee in procuring the loan of a few cushions, for the comfort of himself and the Mahomedan, tended much to enable me to set off the entertainment in a manner suitable to the propensities of the person invited. I was aware, that to expect my late companion earlier than after sunset would be ridiculous, as his prayers occurred at that period ; and I had observed him, even during the march, constant in their per-

formance : but when a full hour, over and above my calculations, kept me fretting with anxiety, I began to despair of his fulfilling his promise. The moonshee sat smoking the new calleoon I had purchased for the indulgence of himself and the stranger, with little less than peevishness, explaining to me that these sort of people could not be relied on ; and how foolish he had been to trouble himself at all about the matter, which he, indeed, would not have done, had it not been master's hookum ;* for his knowledge of the world had given rise, in his own mind, to general mistrust. " To insult me yesterday !" he ejaculated with vehemence ; " and now again to make me await the pleasure of his coming, to hear some idle, useless tale about himself. Unless he should come quickly, and you, Khodavind, have no further use for your slave's services, I shall depart, and take a lesson from the present occurrence, not to be again so over-relying. A few minutes' more delay served yet further to increase his chagrin, and made him more vehement in attaching a perfect indifference to his coming or not.

* Order.

“ Well,” said he at last, “ if I was possessed of your power, sir,” addressing himself to me, “ I would act a similar part on his arrival, to that of one of the ministers of Delhi.”—“ And pray, moonshee, what may that be,” said I; “ for, unacquainted as I am with the story to which you allude, how can I take copy from the minister’s conduct? Let me hear you recite it.” “ It so happened,” resumed the moonshee, “ that in the reign of Acbar, there were two youths, studying under one moollah, who became most intimate friends during early youth, insomuch so, that when one was elevated by the monarch’s pleasure, and created a minister of some importance at court, the other conceived he had a right to solicit, on several occasions, the use of his influence, to promote his own views in life. The one already in power had invariably conceded to the other’s request, but, as often as a meeting was to take place, previous to introduction at Durbar, so often did it occur that a failure took place, on the supplicant’s part, to attend in time at the place appointed, where it was intended they should get ready for the expected ceremony. The king himself, at last, could not help remark-

ing to the minister, that his friend must see something more awful in approaching the royal person, than other subjects usually did, as even the condescension of a granted permission to perform his obeisance, had hitherto failed to entice him to the presence. ‘Take heed, my friend,’ the king continued, jestingly, ‘for who knows but that you may be basking unthinkingly within the compass of the spring of a royal tiger.’ The minister, upon this, became ashamed; for where can you find one of my countrymen who would relish a jest of this description, and was resolved to try some expedient, to cure his friend of his negligence. By chance, some few days after the king’s comment had been made, the minister was assailed by his friend with reproaches, on an alleged indifference for his welfare, now that the sun of good fortune had lighted him on the road to prosperity. ‘Look me in the face,’ said this ingrate, ‘and then behold these tattered rags, which adorn the body of him who has reached your doorway barefooted; and can you call the part you have acted, that of an honest man?’ The minister, although hurt at his ingratitude, promised his friend that, if he would attend at

his house the following morning, shortly after prayers, he would introduce him to the Shahan Shah, or king of kings, and place him under the shadow of his benign protection. Away went the friend, satisfied. The minister called his servants together, and instructed the door-keeper, that a person would inquire for him at a certain hour, and to admit him; but if he came afterwards, to desire his name might be given, and if it corresponded with the one he had mentioned, to assemble the furoshes of the household, bind him, and inflict on him several severe blows with the bastinado. The morrow came, and the time appointed; but the friend failed to appear. About mid-day the minister, who had forgotten the circumstance, hearing loud screams coming from the quarter of his court-yard, hastened from his private apartments, and found his friend suffering a severe infliction of punishment, his feet all bruised and gashed, himself writhing with pain, almost fainting, from the severe chastisement the servants had extended their master's order into. On his arrival, the bleeding man requested to know why he was thus treated. The minister replied—'Because, by your constantly failing to

appear at court, the king is offended with me ; and is it just that the really guilty party should escape free of punishment, more especially when he can upbraid, with his speech, those who are his kindest friends ? ” ”

The moonshee had scarcely finished his tale, with a declaration that he would have cut his tongue out, when the Mahommedan entered, and was welcomed to our small party. The hookah was handed to our guest, and a cup of coffee brought by Mahommed, my head servant, as well as some scented sherbet, made of the pomegranate. A momentary pensiveness clouded the stranger's brow ; an occasional twist of his mustachios followed, a deep frown added a thoughtful expression to his countenance, before the first burst of communication relieved our anxiety, and soothed to attention the haughty bearing of my tutor.

About forty years since, (he commenced) ere the bud of my years had yet blossomed into maturity, the events I am about to detail had their origin. It was at this time that I first became acquainted with her, whose lovely face, elegant stature, accomplished mind, and pure

affection, ruled with tyrannical sway over my youthful passions, and which formed the chief solace of my life for many years. As, perchance, the recital of the events of an earlier period may tend to throw a faint excuse over the disastrous consequences of my attachment, which ended in hurrying her attached father to his grave, and throwing a gloom over the youthful mind of her I adored, and serve in some measure, Saheb, to divert you, I will begin the recital of my life at a more remote date. I am, by birth, descended from a long line of ancestry, who always preserved a spotless character, even amongst all the vicissitudes which they had for many years been witness to, before my father came in turn to perpetuate their fame. Ahmedabad, during the term of their life-time, as well as before and ever since, was and has been a prey to the violence of contending factions. The most distinguished honours were, however, whichever party was successful, lavished on my forefathers, insomuch so, that every lineal descendant of their family could with pleasure look back upon his heritage of noble birth, and boast of the unsullied character of his parents. Several of

their private residences are still extant in this city ; but may the curse of God light upon the idolaters ; (now occupied by Mahrattas.)

Where once the ever-blessed name of Allah burst from the lips of those, to whom the Koran shines as a beacon to everlasting happiness in behist,* the profanation of an idol is. Where once the quiet unassuming prayer of an Islamite, stole from the lips of my ancestors, in praise of Allah, spoken in the half-subdued whisper, accompanied with the low salaam of obedience to his Almighty will, the boisterous noise of the drum, the twanging of the bells used in poojah,† aided with the loud vociferations of the half-naked Brahmins, dancing round a curved stone, hideous in appearance, painted with vermillion, and decorated with flowers, presents a sight as disgusting to behold, as unavailing in the cause of those who seek the pleasures of the future by such forbidden means.

With my grandfather, whose extravagance far exceeded his means, the prosperity of our

* *Behist*.—Paradise. † *Poojah*.—Idolatrous worship.

house began its decline. The accumulated wealth of years of industry, the collections of spoil, and the profits of mercantile transactions, were by him lavished (on those whose very society ought to have been considered as debasing as unprofitable,) with an unsparing hand. Profusion was mistaken by him for splendour, useless cost for multiplied luxury, extravagance for generosity, and sensuality for pleasure; so that the riches he could once boast of, soon dwindled away, and were, when compared with his desires, as insufficient to indulge them, as one laden water-skin drawn from the well, is, to nourish the whole adjacent gardens. Devoted to pleasure, he failed to signalize himself; enervated by disease, contracted in his youthful career of libertinism, his mind became inactive, and his strength unequal to the toil and labour of a military career. His early death alone secured to my father the inheritance of the Inaum Jagier, the situation of which you are already acquainted with; on which, comparatively speaking a poor man, he was, to support the becoming dignity of the titles of Khan and Bahadour, which for years had been enjoyed by his forefathers; this

was the last and the faintest gleam of the smiling fortune which had hitherto favoured us, and although insufficient to support any great style or magnificence, the little which remained sufficed to ward off poverty. My father was enabled, with his diminished patrimony, to support himself, his harem, and his children, very respectably. The person to whom my father was by his parents betrothed, according to our customs, was my own mother, and although two other ladies of high birth were afterwards added to his harem, neither was enabled to divest any considerable portion of his affection from his first wife. The second in his esteem, bore him, sometime after marriage, a daughter, (may she ever be happy) who is yet living; whilst the third, having disgraced the honour of her alliance, was divorced, and having received her marriage portion, was never more heard of, or sought after by him during his lifetime. My mother, when in a state of pregnancy, was removed from the troubles and turbulence of a city life, to the quiet seclusion of our estate; my father, being most anxious for her safety, having as yet no child or son to illuminate the barren

darkness of his home, or bear onwards the transcendant fame of his predecessors to future ages. In this retreat, after the lapse of several months, the happy hour destined to quiet the apprehension of my father at length arrived. It was an hour of blissful pleasure to all but my suffering mother, who, after a severe trial and protracted labour, at length gave the first-born and only son to the family, in myself. This event was suited to its importance, by the magnificent manner in which it was celebrated—yet, amidst the rejoicings, my father's state of mind was sadly agitated, by the unfavourable reports of my much-loved mother's health. A violent, yet apparently slight fever, seized on my mother's constitution in these moments of enervation, and only a few weeks after my birth were allowed her as a recompense for patiently enduring that portion of misery which she underwent, and which, doubtless, was written in her fate. A partial recovery was, by the damp cold of the monsoon, converted into a fatal relapse; many medicines, I have heard, were improperly made use of as remedies, and terminated all my mother's earthly cares, calling her to the bliss-

ful enjoyment of the portion of a follower of Mahomet, in the future, and resigning her to the mercy of Allah. (Here the narrator paused, whilst tears stole down the aged cheeks and care-worn wrinkles, the hand of time and misfortune had furrowed in them, of the old man, who indulged for a moment, in the low murmur of a prayer, calling down benedictions on her departed soul, and consigning her to that bliss, he felt assured, from his conviction of the certainty of an hereafter, the persuasion of her religion might entitle her to receive. He then resumed his narrative.)

How can I depict to you, (he continued,) the grief which overwhelmed all our household on this occasion, as I was not then able to appreciate such a feeling, could I have been witness to it. My tender age debarred me from any knowledge of these circumstances. But I have heard that for several years my father was inconsolable for the loss he had sustained. The gay scenes in which he had before revelled, when youth was in its prime, and every object once of interest and novelty, were forsaken. The nautch, the dance, the song, were alike disregarded in

the indulgence of his sorrow, and the mantle of grief for a length of time enveloped the heart of him, whose mirth and gaiety had before become proverbial. He was ever after rather morose than urbane in his manners : it seemed as if his generous feelings had been chilled within him, although his naturally mild disposition had not been entirely changed. This I can well imagine to have been the case, having myself had, in my lifetime, to combat the agonizing sorrow of losing her, who was the very essence of my existence, and since whose loss, I can see the reflected image of what my father's after character was represented to me as, in my own. The circumstances that are yet fresh on my memory's tablet, found me a lad, able-bodied, twelve years' old, initiated in the sacred texts of the Koran, and left wholly to the guidance of a religious Moollah, whose austere manner and incessant control, forbade, in a great measure, the truant disposition of my childhood, increasing with my years. His fond solicitude for the child of my father, for so he was pleased to term me, founded on the liberal hospitality and support he had received from him, knew no bounds. He was an aged man, weaned

from the fancied pleasures of this world, and whose cup had, indeed, been an overcharged cup of misery. He had drunk the draught of bitterness in the loss of a blooming family, put to a cruel death, whilst a torture was inflicted on himself, by the merciless tyrant who had crushed his happiness, in his being permitted to live on, to feed the fuel of chagrin, and waste away in sorrow. "Would to God," he has exclaimed to me, in reverting to these horrors, "that the keen scymetar, warmed with the blood of my children, had fallen upon my devoted head! But no, it was not the will of Allah, my son, and to it we must submit." He had seen the object of his most tender solicitude—a loving wife, stolen by force from her home, and immured within the precincts of a licentiate's harem, were nought but a forced smile ever mantled upon the cheeks of youth and innocence. His wealth was confiscated at the same time, and what more misfortune could have overtaken him? It was in this distress my father befriended him, and his feeling heart responded to the kind impulse of gratitude, whilst life remained within him. Knowing he was the only confidant, my father reposed his

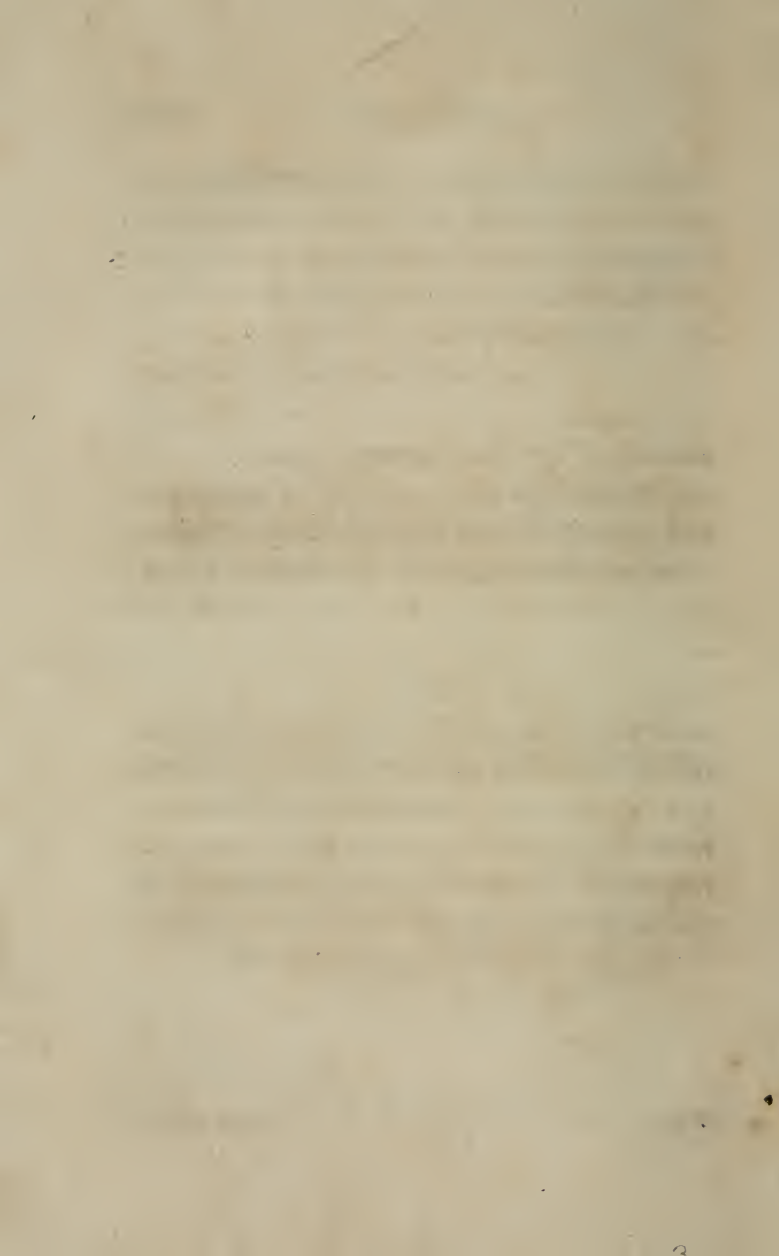
secrets with, and the anxiety entertained by him on my account, he himself undertook the task of my education, which his knowledge of the world and eminent learning, well fitted him to complete, with satisfaction to his own feelings, and benefit to me. His sole occupation in life, whilst I knew him, appeared to consist in a rigid adherence to the tenets of our holy religion, and whilst he fell far short in his devotions, of over enthusiasm, and most laudably so, he yet acted the part of a really good Mahommedan; his manners were pleasing in the extreme; kind and courteous in his behaviour, he won the good will and affection of all those with whom chance associated him. Having himself been the sport of misfortune, he could make every allowance for the feelings of others; and his charitable disposition, warmed by a sense of his own sufferings, ever urged him to listen to a tale of woe, and grant his assistance to the distressed. The prescribed fasts with him were strictly maintained; no excuse would his idea of his duty as an Islamite, allow of his making for their evasion; if actively employed, or diligently engaged in fatiguing pursuits, the setting sun still found him

an hungred, with parched lips, awaiting patiently the coming of the lawful time, permitting men to indulge in eating and drinking. Nor was this time, as so frequently occurs with others, improperly made use of. There was no revelry and feasting by midnight, observed by him, neither did he make use of intoxicating and narcotic drugs, to soften the rigours of his daily fast, by exciting sleep during the enervating heat of the day-time. No ! the same frugal meal was partaken of to nourish nature, as he daily provided for the same purpose, and at his usual hour he sought repose.

The sacred name of the holy Prophet, was constantly blended in his conversations with me, and many a sincere prayer, of which the language was the offspring of his natural kindness, solicited the grant of His mercy, and the assistance of His Almighty power, to guide and direct my way through life. My reckless spirit often caused him serious displeasure, when he discovered my impatience at his rebukes, or daring and giddy indifference to expositions of the sacred texts of the Koran. From the eager admiration they excited in him, they were, I fear, esteemed

equally agreeable objects for my contemplation at that time. Alas, then, it was not so. Youth is too sanguine in its own prowess, and too heedless of the future, to place that reliance in God, which, after age generally proves the necessity of doing, and to which the instructions of my tutor urged my attention by every possible means in his power. He, by turns, illustrated the greatness of the Almighty, and the imbecility of human nature, now led me forth into the recesses of mountains, now into the dark and almost impenetrable jungles, and then again directed my gaze to the sarcophagi ; wandered with me through Kuberistans,* and pointed out the mosques or shrines in the neighbourhood, fast falling into decay and ruin. Nevertheless, the main object of my tutor's care, in this respect, was entirely lost, he failed to render me, in my younger days, one of those sincere believers, which his lifetime furnished an untarnished example of.

* *Kuberistans*.—Burial places.



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